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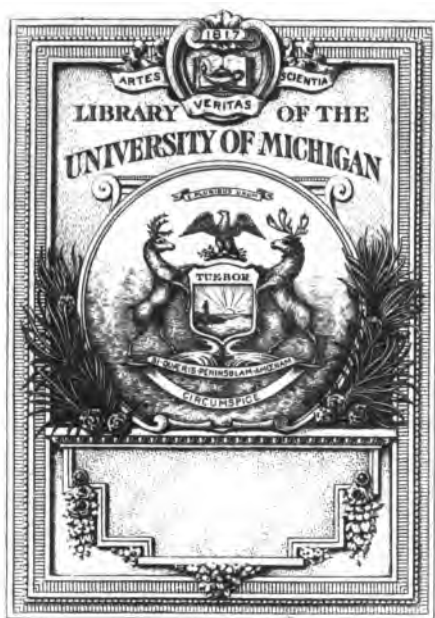
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Hermann Sudermann

Hermann Sudermann



SHORT STORY CLASSICS

(FOREIGN)

VOLUME THREE
GERMAN

EDITED BY
William Patten

WITH
AN INTRODUCTION
AND NOTES



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THE PERSONAL EQUATION

ABSTRACTS FROM NOTES BY HENRY JAMES, JOSEPH
CONRAD, GRACE KING, PAUL BOURGET, GEORGE
BRANDES, WILHELM VON RIEHL, AND GEORGE
ELLINGER

THE following notes permit of a comparison between the work of Turgenev, Balzac, De Maupassant, and Mérimée and that of three leading German writers, Heyse, Von Riehl, and Von Wildenbruch, and show us the attitude of the respective writers toward life and toward their work.

"The germ of a story with Turgenev," says Henry James, "was never an affair of plot—that was the last thing he thought of: it was the representation of certain persons. The first form in which a tale appeared to him was as the figure of an individual, or a combination of individuals, whom he wished to see in action, being sure that such people must do something very special and interesting. They stood before him definite, vivid, and he wished to know, and to show, as much as possible of their nature. The first thing was to make clear to himself what he did know, to begin with; and to this end he wrote out a sort of biography of each of his characters, and everything

that they had done and that had happened to them up to the opening of the story. He had their *dossier*, as the French say, and as the police has of that of every conspicuous criminal. With this material in his hand he was able to proceed; the story all lay in the question: What shall I make them do? He always made them do things that showed them completely; but, as he said, the defect of his manner and the reproach that was made him was his want of 'architecture'—in other words, of composition. The great thing, of course, is to have architecture as well as precious material, as Walter Scott had them, as Balzac had them. If one reads Turgenev's stories with the knowledge that they were composed—or rather that they came into being—in this way, one can trace the process in every line. Story, in the conventional sense of the word—a fable constructed, like Wordsworth's phantom, 'to startle and waylay'—there is as little as possible. The thing consists of the motions of a group of selected creatures, which are not the result of a preconceived action, but a consequence of the qualities of the actors. Works of art are produced from every possible point of view, and stories, and very good ones, will continue to be written in which the evolution is that of a dance—a series of steps, the more complicated and lively the better, of course, determined from without and forming a figure."

Wilhelm von Riehl, the well-known German writer, who died in 1907, took quite a different attitude toward his material, one that was characteristic of the literary traditions of the Fatherland. In the author's preface

to his "Kulturgeschichtliche Novellen" he has this to say in explanation of his point of view and his methods of envisaging his subject:

"It seems to me that the problem of historical story writing is to display upon the background of the social conditions of a given period freely modeled characters with their conflicting emotions. The scene is historical. It is, then, in brief, fictitious persons which are to appear in the foreground and be depicted with a delicate brush—a fictitious plot which can be shaped epically with full liberty, not a historical plot; at least not one of general political history. For in the corners of special history we can still get trace of intrigues and heroes, plastic for the story writer, without offending the historical consciousness of the nation by poetic license. Events of general political history may loom up afar off, persons of general political history may cross the background of the stage of the historical novel or story; let the ground, however, upon which the fictitious plot moves rest upon pillars of the history of the period, let the air which the fictitious persons breathe be the air of their century, and let the thoughts by which they are moved be a mirror of the general political ideas of their own days. . . .

"In my story, 'Burg Neideck,' I had in mind Burg Reichenberg, near St. Goarshausen, on the Rhine. How I came to discover and work up the material I have set forth in detail in my latest book, 'Kulturgeschichtliche Charakterköpfe,' in the essay, 'A Rhine Journey with Victor Scheffel,' page 207. As for the rest, the whole story is a product of my imagination

in which are scattered everywhere true ethical pictures of the times (Kulturgeschichtliche Züge). . . .

"But as we passed on our way and cast another glance back at the Burg, Scheffel found the picture so exquisitely beautiful that he sat down under the next tree, and, in spite of thirst, carefully drew for a whole hour the Burg and landscape.

"During this unexpected rest, I spun out further my thoughts concerning the beautiful ruin; the porter seemed to me a very lucky being, who could live year after year in the Burg and with the Burg as with a faithful mistress. I determined to write a story in which such a ruined piece of wall should determine the happiness and fate of the otherwise happy condition of good, free people, and so grew in me the plan of the story 'Burg Neideck,' which, according to my custom, I threw about in my mind for a year before bringing it forth."

Paul Heyse is practically a contemporary of Wilhelm von Riehl, though he was born seven years later, and his literary style is also clearly related to the national literary traditions of his generation.

The celebrated Danish critic, Georg Brandes, has this to say of Heyse's work:

"The 'novelle' with him always has extremely few and simple factors, the number of the personages introduced is small, the action is concise and may be surveyed with a single glance. But his fiction does not exist for the sake of the personages alone, as in the modern French novels, which only satisfy a psychological or a physiological interest; it has its own

peculiar mode of development and its independent interest. . . . With Heyse the 'novelle' is not a picture of the times, or a *genre* painting; something always *does happen* with him, and it is always something unexpected. The plot, as a rule, is so arranged that at a certain point an unforeseen change takes place; a surprise which, when the reader looks back, always proves to have had a firm and carefully prepared foundation in what went before. At this point the action sharpens; here the threads unite to form a knot from which they are spun around in an opposite direction. The enjoyment of the reader is based upon the art with which the purpose of the action is gradually more and more veiled and hidden from view, until suddenly the covering falls. His surprise is caused by the skill with which Heyse apparently strays farther and farther away from the goal which rose beyond the starting-point, until he finally discovers that he has been led through a winding path and finds himself exactly above the point where the story began.

"Heyse himself, in his introduction to his 'Deutscher Novellenschatz,' has expressed his views on the principle to which he does homage in his 'novellen' compositions.

"He lays stress on the statement that, according to his esthetic taste, he would give the preference to *that* 'novelle' whose main motive is most distinctly finished, and—with more or less intrinsic worth—betrays something peculiar, specific, in the original design. '*A strong silhouette*,' he continues, 'should not be lacking in what is called a "novelle" in the proper sense of the

novelist. The writer of the article, George Ellinger, traces most interestingly the first expression of Wildenbruch's observation of the real sorrows of child life to a passage in the dramatist's play, "Francesca von Rimini," where he says: "It is a thousand times repeated opinion that the days of youth are for every man the happiest of his life; on the contrary, they are for many far more fruitful of a more poignant torture than are his riper years. The struggle of existence in youth is much more relentless and more thoroughly fought out than it is in later life.

"Wildenbruch took up the study of this phase of life," says Ellinger, "in his three masterpieces, the short stories, 'Der Letzte' ('The Parting,' in his 'Children's Tears'), 'Das Edle Blut' ('Good Blood'), and 'Neid' ('Jealousy'). He points out how in the first two Wildenbruch shows the depth to which even the soul of a child is sensitive to the lot in which he is cast, not in circumstances of great import, but in such simple ones as present themselves in the life of every man. Nevertheless, in the sorrow of the child of these stories we recognize a great artistic subject which strikes us to the core. The effect of the action is immeasurably increased by the poet's placing the account of the child's sorrow in the mouth of two grown men, who are present, and who recognize and sympathize with the childish grief, and out of whose souls the pathetic picture grows as if newly created.

"The art of story-telling, in this as in other tales of Wildenbruch, must not be lightly valued. The poet understands thoroughly how to hold the interest of

the reader. He scorns to produce laboriously a boasting objectivity by means of which the story-teller disappears entirely behind his work; this gives, therefore, the powerful impression that the poet himself takes a lively interest in his creation."

In an article on the short stories of Balzac, Paul Bourget has pointed out how thoroughly that author appreciated the characteristics and value of the short story form. Balzac's ideas were formulated at about the same time that Hawthorne and Poe gave their ideas on the subject to the world. "Balzac," writes Bourget, "handles both forms (the novel and the short story) with equal mastery. Having made a profound study of the technique of his profession, he knew that a short story is not a short novel and that a novel is not a long short story.

"One characteristic will strike the readers of some of his short stories: the tragic note in the subjects. This characteristic is found in the most celebrated short stories of Mérimée—'Matteo Falcone' and 'The Taking of the Redoubt.' From this point of view four of Balzac's short stories are significant: 'El Verdugo,' 'Un Episode Sous la Terreur,' 'Le Réquisitionnaire,' and 'La Grande Brèche.' The reason for the preference given to these violent subjects over others in short stories is easy to understand. Terror is of all human emotions the one that requires the least time. The sudden start is the condition from which it most quickly springs, as duration is the condition that most quickly cures it. It can only be produced in a novel by accident. The short story becomes an ex-

cellent medium for it, because it is short. There is no room for development or preparations. The more a tragic action is unexpected the tighter it grips us with fear and anguish. It is thus an advantage that the subject of a short story should be as astonishing as it is terrifying. Balzac clearly perceived this law.

"Is there not a contradiction between a too lucid intelligence and the creative energy? Does not art require a portion of almost animal instinct that too much thinking is apt to destroy?" That is the moral of "The Unknown Masterpiece," the first story in volume four of this collection.

The comment on Mérimée's masterly short story is quoted from a preface by Grace King, the well-known Southern author:

"'The Taking of the Redoubt' resembles 'Carmen' in this, that the author so completely effaces his personality from the teller of the story, that one finds it easier to suppose than not that the incident was related to him, as he says in the prefatory note, by the officer to whom it happened, and that he merely wrote it down from memory. The concession, however, concedes nothing, as long as the word 'memory' is retained in the explanation. For what it stands for here is an imagination that could make the carelessly dropped incident its own, and turn upon it a marvelous sight (lens-eye and light, all in one), until what we read was as clear to Mérimée as it is to us now. Then he wrote it down in the pages that are without a match in the thousands of descriptions of battles that have been written. 'As one does not go to another for

words to describe what one sees one's self, so we need no interpreter of our sensations when we read 'The Taking of the Redoubt.' It is for us alone, as Mérimée seems to tell us, to read it or not to read it, to see what took place or not see it."

And finally, in closing, there is this illuminating comment on one phase of De Maupassant's work by Joseph Conrad, the author of "Lord Jim," "Youth," and "Falk," whose work will some day come into the wider recognition which is this artist's due. It is from a little-known preface published in England:

"In De Maupassant's work there is the interest of curiosity and the moral of a point of view consistently preserved and never obtruded for the end of personal gratification. The spectacle of this immense talent, served by exceptional faculties, triumphing over the most thankless subjects by an unswerving singleness of purpose is in itself an admirable lesson in the power of artistic honesty, one may say of artistic virtue. The inherent greatness of the man consists in this, that he will let none of the fascinations that beset a writer working in loneliness turn him away from the straight path, from the vouchsafed vision of excellence. He will not be led into perdition by the seductions of sentiment, of eloquence, of humor, of pathos; of all that splendid pageant of faults that pass between the writer and his probity on the blank sheet of paper, like the glittering cortège of deadly sins before the austere anchorite in the desert air of Thebaide. This is not to say that De Maupassant's austerity has never faltered; but the fact remains that no tempting demon

has ever succeeded in hurling him down from his high, if narrow, pedestal. . . .

"He refrains from setting his cleverness against the eloquence of the facts. There is humor and pathos in these stories; but such is the greatness of his talent, the refinement of his artistic conscience, that all his high qualities appear inherent in the very things of which he speaks, as if they had been altogether independent of his presentation. Facts, and again facts, are his unique concern. That is why he is not always properly understood. His facts are so perfectly rendered that, like the actualities of life itself, they demand from the reader that faculty of observation which is rare, the power of appreciation which is generally wanting in most of us who are guided mainly by empty phrases requiring no effort, demanding from us no qualities except a vague susceptibility to emotion."

THE BROKEN CUP

BY JOHANN HEINRICH DANIEL ZSCHOKKE



Unlike most of the early romantic writers of Germany, Zschokke is still read in his own country and abroad. He was born in Magdeburg in 1771 and died in 1848, honored throughout Germany as liberal and patriot during the Napoleonic wars.

After a sojourn in Switzerland as head of the Department of Education in the Canton of Grisons and later of the Department of Forests and Mines in the Canton of Aargau, he began to devote himself more exclusively to literature, producing with amazing versatility a great number of works on religion, history, politics, and the drama. But popularity came to him through his charming short stories, written in a rather loose and careless style, but full of vivacity, imagination, humor, and a broad knowledge of life and character. Many years of literary sifting have proved "The Adventures of a New-Year's Eve" and "The Broken Cup" to be the most enduring and popular of his short stories.



THE BROKEN CUP

BY HEINRICH ZSCHOKKE

AUTHOR'S NOTE.—There is extant under this name a short piece by the author of "Little Kate of Heilbronn." That and the tale which here follows originated in an incident which took place at Bern in the year 1802. Henry Von Kleist and Ludwig Wieland, the son of the poet, were both friends of the writer, in whose chamber hung an engraving called *La Cruche Cassée*, the persons and contents of which resembled the scene set forth below, under the head of The Tribunal. The drawing, which was full of expression, gave great delight to those who saw it, and led to many conjectures as to its meaning. The three friends agreed, in sport, that they would each one day commit to writing his peculiar interpretation of its design. Wieland promised a satire; Von Kleist threw off a comedy; and the author of the following tale what is here given.

THAT Napoule is only a very little place on the bay of Cannes is true; yet it is pretty well known through all Provence. It lies in the shade of lofty evergreen palms, and darker orange trees; but that alone would not make it renowned. Still they say that there are grown the most luscious grapes, the sweetest roses, and the handsomest girls. I don't know but it is so; in the mean time I believe it most readily. Pity that Napoule is so small, and can not produce more luscious grapes, fragrant roses, and handsome maidens; especially, as we might then have some of them transplanted to our own country.

As, ever since the foundation of Napoule, all the Napoulese women have been beauties, so the little

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Marietta was a wonder of wonders, as the chronicles of the place declare. She was called the little Marietta; yet she was not smaller than a girl of seventeen or thereabout ought to be, seeing that her forehead just reached up to the lips of a grown man.

The chronicles aforesaid had very good ground for speaking of Marietta. I, had I stood in the shoes of the chronicler, would have done the same. For Marietta, who until lately had lived with her mother Manon at Avignon, when she came back to her birthplace, quite upset the whole village. Verily, not the houses, but the people and their heads; and not the heads of all the people, but of those particularly whose heads and hearts are always in danger when in the neighborhood of two bright eyes. I know very well that such a position is no joke.

Mother Manon would have done much better if she had remained at Avignon. But she had been left a small inheritance, by which she received at Napoule an estate consisting of some vine-hills, and a house that lay in the shadow of a rock, between certain olive trees and African acacias. This is a kind of thing which no unprovided widow ever rejects; and, accordingly, in her own estimation, she was as rich and happy as though she were the Countess of Provence or something like it.

So much the worse was it for the good people of Napoule. They never suspected their misfortune, not having read in Homer how a single pretty woman had filled all Greece and Lesser Asia with discord and war.

.

Marietta had scarcely been fourteen days in the house, between the olive trees and the African acacias, before every young man of Napoule knew that she lived there, and that there lived not, in all Provence, a more charming girl than the one in that house.

Went she through the village, sweeping lightly along like a dressed-up angel, her frock, with its pale-green bodice, and orange leaves and rosebuds upon the bosom of it, fluttering in the breeze, and flowers and ribbons waving about the straw bonnet, which shaded her beautiful features—yes, then the grave old men spake out, and the young ones were struck dumb. And everywhere, to the right and left, little windows and doors were opened with a “Good morning,” or a “Good evening, Marietta,” as it might be, while she nodded to the right and left with a pleasant smile.

If Marietta walked into church, all hearts (that is, of the young people) forgot Heaven; all eyes turned from the saints, and the worshiping finger wandered idly among the pearls of the rosary. This must certainly have provoked much sorrow, at least, among the more devout.

The maidens of Napoule particularly became very pious about this time, for they, most of all, took the matter to heart. And they were not to be blamed for it; for since the advent of Marietta more than one prospective groom had become cold, and more than one worshiper of some beloved one quite inconstant. There were bickerings and reproaches on all sides, many tears, pertinent lectures, and even rejections. The talk was no longer of marriages, but of separa-

tions. They began to return their pledges of troth, rings, ribbons, etc. The old persons took part with their children; criminations and strife spread from house to house; it was most deplorable.

Marietta is the cause of all, said the pious maidens first; then the mothers said it; next the fathers took it up; and finally all—even the young men. But Marietta, shielded by her modesty and innocence, like the petals of the rosebud in its dark-green calix, did not suspect the mischief of which she was the occasion, and continued courteous to everybody. This touched the young men, who said, "Why condemn the pure and harmless child—she is not guilty!" Then the fathers said the same thing; then the mothers took it up, and finally all—even the pious maidens. For, let who would talk with Marietta, she was sure to gain their esteem. So before half a year had passed, everybody had spoken to her, and everybody loved her. But she did not suspect that she was the object of such general regard, as she had not before suspected that she was the object of dislike. Does the violet, hidden in the duntrodden grass, think how sweet it is?

Now every one wished to make amends for the injustice they had done Marietta. Sympathy deepened the tenderness of their attachment. Marietta found herself greeted everywhere in a more friendly way than ever; she was more cordially welcomed; more heartily invited to the rural sports and dances.

All men, however, are not endowed with tender sympathy; some have hearts hardened like Pharaoh's.

This arises, no doubt, from that natural depravity which has come upon men in consequence of the fall of Adam, or because, at their baptism, the devil is not brought sufficiently under subjection.

A remarkable example of this hardness of heart was given by one Colin, the richest farmer and proprietor in Napoule, whose vineyards and olive gardens, whose lemon and orange trees could hardly be counted in a day. One thing particularly demonstrates the perverseness of his disposition; he was twenty-seven years old, and had never yet asked for what purpose girls had been created!

True, all the people, especially damsels of a certain age, willingly forgave him this sin, and looked upon him as one of the best young men under the sun. His fine figure, his fresh, unembarrassed manner, his look, his laugh, enabled him to gain the favorable opinion of the aforesaid people, who would have forgiven him, had there been occasion, any one of the deadly sins. But the decision of such judges is not always to be trusted.

While both old and young at Napoule had become reconciled to the innocent Marietta, and proffered their sympathies to her, Colin was the only one who had no pity upon the poor child. If Marietta was talked of he became as dumb as a fish. If he met her in the street he would turn red and white with anger, and cast sidelong glances at her of the most malicious kind.

If at evening the young people met upon the seashore near the old castle ruins for sprightly pastimes, or rural dances, or to sing catches, Colin was the mer-

riest among them. But as soon as Marietta arrived the rascally fellow was silent, and all the gold in the world couldn't make him sing. What a pity, when he had such a fine voice! Everybody listened to it so willingly, and its store of songs was endless.

All the maidens looked kindly upon Colin, and he was friendly with all of them. He had, as we have said, a roguish glance, which the lasses feared and loved; and it was so sweet they would like to have had it painted. But, as might naturally be expected, the offended Marietta did not look graciously upon him. And in that she was perfectly right. Whether he smiled or not, it was all the same to her. As to his roguish glance, why she would never hear it mentioned; and therein too she was perfectly right. When he told a tale (and he knew thousands) and everybody listened, she nudged her neighbor, or perhaps threw tufts of grass at Peter or Paul, and laughed and chattered, and did not listen to Colin at all. This behavior quite provoked the proud fellow, so that he would break off in the middle of his story and stalk sullenly away.

Revenge is sweet. The daughter of Mother Manon well knew how to triumph. Yet Marietta was a right good child and quite too tender-hearted. If Colin was silent, it gave her pain. If he was downcast, she laughed no more. If he went away, she did not stay long behind: but hurried to her home, and wept tears of repentance, more beautiful than those of the Magdalen, although she had not sinned like the Magdalen.

.. .. .

Father Jerome, the pastor of Napoule, was an old man of seventy, who possessed all the virtues of a saint, and only one failing; which was, that by reason of his advanced years, he was hard of hearing. But, on that very account, his homilies were more acceptable to the children of his baptism and blessing. True, he preached only of two subjects, as if they comprehended the whole of religion. It was either "Little children, love one another," or it was "Mysterious are the ways of Providence." And truly there is so much Faith, Love, and Hope in these that one might at a pinch be saved by them. The little children loved one another most obediently, and trusted in the ways of Providence. Only Colin, with his flinty heart, would know nothing of either: for even when he professed to be friendly, he entertained the deepest malice.

The Napoulese went to the annual market or fair of the city of Vence. It was truly a joyful time, and though they had but little gold to buy with, there were many goods to look at. Now Marietta and Mother Manon went to the fair with the rest, and Colin was also there. He bought a great many curiosities and trifles for his friends—but he would not spend a farthing for Marietta. And yet he was always at her elbow, though he did not speak to her, nor she to him. It was easy to see that he was brooding over some scheme of wickedness.

Mother Manon stood gazing before a shop, when she suddenly exclaimed:

"Oh! Marietta, see that beautiful cup! A queen would not be ashamed to raise it to her lips. Only

see: the edge is of dazzling gold, and the flowers upon it could not bloom more beautifully in the garden, although they are only painted. 'And in the midst of this Paradise! pray see, Marietta, how the apples are smiling on the trees. They are verily tempting. 'And 'Adam can not withstand it, as the enchanting Eve offers him one for food! 'And do see how prettily the little frisking lamb skips around the old tiger, and the snow-white dove with her golden throat stands there before the vulture, as if she would caress him!"

Marietta could not satisfy herself with looking. "Had I such a cup, mother!" said she, "it is far too beautiful to drink out of: I would place my flowers in it and constantly peep into Paradise. We are at the fair in Vence, but when I look on the picture I feel as if I were in Paradise."

So spoke Marietta, and called her companions to the spot, to share her admiration of the cup: but the young men soon joined the maidens, until at length almost half the inhabitants of Napoule were assembled before the wonderfully beautiful cup. But miraculously beautiful was it mainly from its inestimable, translucent porcelain, with gilded handles and glowing colors. They asked the merchant timidly: "Sir, what is the price of it?" And he answered: "Among friends, it is worth a hundred livres." Then they all became silent, and went away in despair. When the Napoulese were all gone from the front of the shop, Colin came there by stealth, threw the merchant a hundred livres upon the counter had the cup put in a box well packed

with cotton, and then carried it off. What evil plans he had in view no one would have surmised.

Near Napoule, on his way home, it being already dusk, he met old Jacques, the Justice's servant, returning from the fields. Jacques was a very good man, but excessively stupid.

"I will give thee money enough to get something to drink, Jacques," said Colin, "if thou wilt bear this box to Manon's house, and leave it there; and if any one should see thee, and inquire from whom the box came, say 'A stranger gave it to me.' But never disclose my name, or I will always detest thee."

Jacques promised this, took the drink-money and the box, and went with it toward the little dwelling between the olive trees and the African acacias.

Before he arrived there he encountered his master, Justice Hautmartin, who asked: "Jacques, what art thou carrying?"

"A box for Mother Manon. But, sir, I can not say from whom it comes."

"Why not?"

"Because Colin would always detest me."

"It is well that thou canst keep a secret. But it is already late; give me the box, for I am going to-morrow to see Mother Manon; I will deliver it to her and not betray that it came from Colin. It will save thee a walk, and furnish me a good excuse for calling on the old lady."

Jacques gave the box to his master, whom he was accustomed to obey implicitly in all things. The jus-

tice bore it into his chamber, and examined it by the light with some curiosity. On the lid was neatly written with red chalk: "For the lovely and dear Marietta." But Monsieur Hautmartin well knew that this was some of Colin's mischief, and that some knavish trick lurked under the whole. He therefore opened the box carefully for fear that a mouse or rat should be concealed within. When he beheld the wondrous cup, which he had seen at Vence, he was dreadfully shocked, for Monsieur Hautmartin was a skilful casuist, and knew that the inventions and devices of the human heart are evil from our youth upward. He saw at once that Colin designed this cup as a means of bringing misfortune upon Marietta: perhaps to give out, when it should be in her possession, that it was the present of some successful lover in the town, or the like, so that all decent people would thereafter keep aloof from Marietta. Therefore Monsieur Hautmartin resolved, in order to prevent any evil reports, to profess himself the giver. Moreover, he loved Marietta, and would gladly have seen her observe more strictly toward himself the sayings of the gray-headed priest Jerome, "Little children, love one another." In truth, Monsieur Hautmartin was a little child of fifty years old, and Marietta did not think the saying applied particularly to him. Mother Manon, on the contrary, thought that the justice was a clever little child, he had gold and a high reputation from one end of Napoule to the other. And when the justice spoke of marriage, and Marietta ran away in affright, Mother Manon remained sitting, and had no fear for the tall,

staid gentleman. It must also be confessed there were no faults in his person. And although Colin might be the handsomest man in the village, yet the justice far surpassed him in two things, namely, in the number of years, and in a very, very big nose. Yes, this nose, which always went before the justice like a herald to proclaim his approach, was a real elephant among human noses.

With this proboscis, his good purpose, and the cup, the justice went the following morning to the house between the olive trees and the African acacias.

"For the beautiful Marietta," said he, "I hold nothing too costly. Yesterday you admired the cup at Vence; to-day allow me, lovely Marietta, to lay it and my devoted heart at your feet."

Manon and Marietta were transported beyond measure when they beheld the cup. Manon's eyes glistened with delight, but Marietta turned and said: "I can neither take your heart nor your cup."

Then Mother Manon was angry, and cried out: "But I accept both heart and cup. Oh, thou little fool, how long wilt thou despise thy good fortune! For whom dost thou tarry? Will a count of Provence make thee his bride, that thou scornest the Justice of Napoule? I know better how to look after my interests. Monsieur Hautmartin, I deem it an honor to call thee my son-in-law."

Then Marietta went out and wept bitterly, and hated the beautiful cup with all her heart.

But the justice, drawing the palm of his flabby hand over his nose, spoke thus judiciously:

"Mother Manon, hurry nothing. The dove will at length, when it learns to know me better, give way. I am not impetuous. I have some skill among women, and before a quarter of a year passes by I will insinuate myself into Marietta's good graces."

"Thy nose is too large for that," whispered Marietta, who listened outside the door and laughed to herself. In fact, the quarter of a year passed by and Monsieur Hautmartin had not yet pierced the heart even with the tip of his nose.

During this quarter of a year Marietta had other affairs to attend to. The cup gave her much vexation and trouble, and something else besides.

For a fortnight nothing else was talked of in Napoule, and every one said it is a present from the justice, and the marriage is already agreed upon. Marietta solemnly declared to all her companions that she would rather plunge to the bottom of the sea than marry the justice, but the maidens continued to banter her all the more, saying: "Oh, how blissful it must be to repose in the shadow of his nose!" This was her first vexation.

Then Mother Manon had the cruelty to force Marietta to rinse out the cup every morning at the spring under the rock and to fill it with fresh flowers. She hoped by this to accustom Marietta to the cup and heart of the giver. But Marietta continued to hate both the gift and giver, and her work at the spring became an actual punishment. Second vexation.

Then, when in the morning, she came to the spring, twice every week she found on the rock, immediately

over it, some most beautiful flowers, handsomely arranged, all ready for the decoration of the cup. And on the flower-stalks a strip of paper was always tied, on which was written, "Dear Marietta." Now no one need expect to impose upon little Marietta as if magicians and fairies were still in the world. Consequently she knew that both the flowers and papers must have come from Monsieur Hautmartin. Marietta, indeed, would not smell them because the living breath from out of the justice's nose had perfumed them. Nevertheless she took the flowers, because they were finer than wild flowers, and tore the slip of paper into a thousand pieces, which she strewed upon the spot where the flowers usually lay. But this did not vex Justice Hautmartin, whose love was unparalleled in its kind as his nose was in its kind. Third vexation.

At length it came out in conversation with Monsieur Hautmartin that he was not the giver of the beautiful flowers. Then who could it be? Marietta was utterly astounded at the unexpected discovery. Thenceforth she took the flowers from the rock more kindly; but, further, Marietta was—what maidens are not wont to be—very inquisitive. She conjectured first this and then that young man in Napoule. Yet her conjectures were in vain. She looked and listened far into the night; she rose earlier than usual. But she looked and listened in vain. And still twice a week in the morning the miraculous flowers lay upon the rock, and upon the strip of paper wound round them she always read the silent sigh, "Dear Marietta!" Such an incident would have made even the most indifferent inquisitive.

But curiosity at length became a burning pain. Fourth vexation.

Now Father Jerome, on Sunday, had again preached from the text: "Mysterious are the dispensations of Providence." And little Marietta thought, if Providence would only dispense that I might at length find out who is the flower dispenser. Father Jerome was never wrong.

On a summer night, when it was far too warm to rest, Marietta awoke very early, and could not resume her sleep. Therefore she sprang joyously from her couch as the first streaks of dawn flashed against the window of her little chamber, over the waves of the sea and the Lerinian Isles, dressed herself, and went out to wash her forehead, breast, and arms in the cool spring. She took her hat with her, intending to take a walk by the seashore, as she knew of a retired place for bathing.

In order to reach this retired spot, it was necessary to pass over the rocks behind the house, and thence down through the orange and palm trees. On this occasion Marietta could not pass through them; for, under the youngest and most slender of the palms lay a tall young man in profound sleep—near him a nosegay of most splendid flowers. A white paper lay thereon, from which probably a sigh was again breathing. How could Marietta get by there?

She stood still, trembling with fright. She would go home again. Hardly had she retreated a couple of steps, ere she looked again at the sleeper, and re-

mained motionless. Yet the distance prevented her from recognizing his face. Now the mystery was to be solved, or never. She tripped lightly nearer to the palms; but he seemed to stir—then she ran again toward the cottage. His movements were but the fearful imaginings of Marietta. Now she returned again on her way toward the palms; but his sleep might perhaps be only dissembled—swiftly she ran toward the cottage—but who would flee for a mere probability? She trod more boldly the path toward the palms.

With these fluctuations of her timid and joyous spirit, between fright and curiosity, with these to-and-fro trippings between the house and the palm-trees, she at length nearly approached the sleeper; at the same time curiosity became more powerful than fear.

“What is he to me? My way leads me directly past him. Whether he sleeps or wakes, I will go straight on.” So thought Manon’s daughter. But she passed not by, but stood looking directly in the face of the flower-giver, in order to be certain who it was. Besides, he slept as if it were the first time in a month. And who was it? Now, who else should it be but the arch, wicked Colin.

So it was *he* who had annoyed the gentle maiden, and given her so much trouble with Monsieur Hautmartin, because he bore a grudge against her; he had been the one who had teased her with flowers, in order to torture her curiosity. Wherefore? He hated Marietta. He behaved himself always most shamefully toward the poor child. He avoided her when he

could; and when he could not, he grieved the good-natured little one. With all the other maidens of Napoule he was more chatty, friendly, courteous, than toward Marietta. Consider—he had never once asked her to dance, and yet she danced bewitchingly.

Now there he lay, surprised, taken in the act. Revenge swelled in Marietta's bosom. What disgrace could she subject him to? She took the nosegay, unloosened it, strewed his present over the sleeper in scorn. But the paper, on which appeared again the sigh, "Dear Marietta!" she retained, and thrust quickly into her bosom. She wished to preserve this proof of his handwriting. Marietta was sly. Now she would go away. But her revenge was not yet satisfied. She could not leave the place without returning Colin's ill-will. She took the violet-colored silken ribbon from her hat, and threw it lightly around the sleeper's arm and around the tree, and with three knots tied Colin fast. Now when he awoke, how astonished he would be! How his curiosity would torment him to ascertain who had played him this trick! He could not possibly know. So much the better; it served him right. She seemed to regret her work when she had finished it. Her bosom throbbed impetuously. Indeed, I believe that a little tear filled her eye, as she compassionately gazed upon the guilty one. Slowly she retreated to the orange grove by the rocks—she looked around often—slowly ascended the rocks, looking down among the palm trees as she ascended. Then she hastened to Mother Manon, who was calling her.

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That very day Colin practised new mischief. What did he? He wished to shame the poor Marietta publicly. Ah! she never thought that every one in Napoule knew her violet-colored ribbon! Colin remembered it but too well. Proudly he bound it around his hat, and exhibited it to the gaze of all the world as a conquest. And male and female cried out: "He has received it from Marietta."—And all the maidens said angrily: "The reprobate!" And all the young men who liked to see Marietta cried out: "The reprobate!"

"How! Mother Manon?" shrieked the Justice Hautmartin when he came to her house, and he shrieked so loudly that it reechoed wonderfully through his nose. "How! do you suffer this? my betrothed presents the young proprietor Colin with her hat-band! It is high time that we celebrate our nuptials. When that is over, then I shall have a right to speak."

"You have a right!" answered Mother Manon, "if things are so, the marriage must take place forthwith. When that is done, all will go right."

"But, Mother Manon, Marietta always refuses to give me her consent."

"Prepare the marriage feast."

"But she will not even look kindly at me; and when I seat myself at her side, the little savage jumps up and runs away."

"Justice, only prepare the marriage feast."

"But if Marietta resists—"

"We will take her by surprise. We will go to Father Jerome on Monday morning early, and he shall quietly celebrate the marriage. This we can

easily accomplished with him. I am her mother, you the first judicial person in Napoule. He must obey. Marietta need know nothing about it. Early on Monday morning I will send her to Father Jerome all alone, with a message so that she will suspect nothing. Then the priest shall speak earnestly to her. Half an hour afterward we two will come. Then swiftly to the altar. And even if Marietta should then say No, what does it matter? The old priest can hear nothing. But till then, mum to Marietta and all Napoule."

So the secret remained with the two. Marietta dreamed not of the good luck which was in store for her. She thought only of Colin's wickedness, which had made her the common talk of the whole place. Oh! how she repented her heedlessness about the ribbon; and yet in her heart she forgave the reprobate his crime. Marietta was far too good. She told her mother, she told all her playmates: "Colin has found my lost band. I never gave it to him. He only wishes to vex me with it. You all know that Colin was always ill-disposed toward me, and always sought to mortify me!"

Ah! the poor child! she knew not what new abomination the malicious fellow was again contriving.

Early in the morning Marietta went to the spring with the cup. There were no flowers yet on the rock. It was still much too early; for the sun had scarcely risen from the sea.

Footsteps were heard. Colin came in sight, the

flowers in his hand. Marietta became very red. Colin stammered out: "Good morning, Marietta," but the greeting came not from his heart.

"Why dost thou wear my ribbon so publicly, Colin?" said Marietta, and placed the cup upon the rock. "I did not give it thee."

"Thou didst not give it to me, dear Marietta?" asked he, and inward rage made him deadly pale.

Marietta was ashamed of the falsehood, drooped her eyelids, and said after a while: "Well, I did give it thee, yet thou shouldst not have worn it. Give it back."

Slowly he untied it; his anger was so great that he could not prevent the tears from filling his eyes, nor the sighs from escaping his breast.—"Dear Marietta, leave thy ribbon with me," said he softly.

"No," answered she.

Then his suppressed passion changed into desperation. Sighing, he looked toward heaven, then sadly on Marietta, who, silent and abashed, stood by the spring with downcast eyes.

He wound the violet-colored ribbon around the stalks of the flowers, and said: "There, take them all," and threw the flowers so spitefully against the magnificent cup upon the rock that it was thrown down and dashed to pieces. Maliciously he fled away.

Mother Manon, lurking behind the window, had seen and heard all. When the cup broke, hearing and sight left her. She was scarcely able to speak for very horror. And as she pushed with all her strength against the narrow window, to shout after the guilty

one, it gave way, and with one crash fell to earth and was shattered in pieces.

So much ill-luck would have discomposed any other woman. But Manon soon recovered herself. "How lucky that I was a witness to this roguery!" exclaimed she; "he must to the justice—he shall replace both cup and window-sash with his gold. It will give a rich dowry to Marietta." But when Marietta brought in the fragments of the shattered cup, when Manon saw the Paradise lost, the good man Adam without a head, and of Eve not a solitary limb remaining, the serpent unhurt, triumphing, the tiger safe, but the little lamb gone even to the very tail, as if the tiger had swallowed it, then Mother Manon screamed forth curses against Colin, and said: "One can easily see that this *fall* came from the hand of the devil."

She took the cup in one hand, Marietta in the other, and went, about nine o'clock, to where Monsieur Hautmartin was wont to sit in judgment. She there made a great outcry, and showed the broken cup and the Paradise lost. Marietta wept bitterly.

The justice, when he saw the broken cup and his beautiful bride in tears, flew into so violent a rage toward Colin that his nose was as violet-colored as Marietta's well-known hat-band. He immediately despatched his bailiffs to bring the criminal before him.

Colin came, overwhelmed with grief. Mother Manon now repeated her complaint with great eloquence before justice, bailiffs, and scribes.—But Colin listened not. He stepped to Marietta and whispered

to her: "Forgive me, dear Marietta, as I forgive thee. I broke thy cup unintentionally; but thou, thou hast broken my heart!"

"What whispering is that?" cried Justice Hautmartin, with magisterial authority. "Harken to this accusation, and defend yourself."

"I have naught to defend. I broke the cup against my will," said Colin.

"That I verily believe," said Marietta, sobbing. "I am as guilty as he; for I offended him—then he threw the ribbon and flowers to me. He could not help it."

"Well!" cried Mother Manon. "Do you intend to defend him? Mr. Justice, pronounce his sentence. He has broken the cup, and he does not deny it."

"Since you can not deny it, Mr. Colin," said the Justice, "you must pay three hundred livres for the cup, for it is worth that; and then for—"

"No," interrupted Cloin, "it is not worth that. I bought it at Vence for Marietta for a hundred livres."

"You bought it, sir brazen face?" shrieked the Justice, and his whole face became like Marietta's husband. He could not and would not say more, for he dreaded a disagreeable investigation of the matter.

But Colin was vexed at the imputation, and said: "I sent this cup on the evening of the fair, by your own servant, to Marietta. There stands Jaques in the door. Speak, Jaques, did I not give thee the box to carry to Mother Manon?"

Monsieur Hautmartin wished to interrupt this conversation by speaking loudly. But the simple Jaques said: "Only recollect, Justice, you took away Colin's

box from me, and carried what was in it to Mother Manon. The box lies there under the papers."

Then the bailiffs were ordered to remove the simpleton; and Colin was also directed to retire, until he should be sent for again.

"Very well, Mr. Justice," interposed Colin, "but this business shall be your last in Napoule. I know this, that you would ingratiate yourself with Mother Manon and Marietta by means of my property. When you want me, you will have to ride to Grasse to the Governor's." With that, Colin departed.

Monsieur Hautmartin was quite puzzled with this affair, and in his confusion knew not what he was about. Manon shook her head. The affair was dark and mysterious to her. "Who will now pay me for the broken cup?" she asked.

"To me," said Marietta, with glowing, brightened countenance, "to *me* it is already paid for."

Colin rode that same day to the Governor at Grasse, and came back early the next morning. But Justice Hautmartin only laughed at him, and removed all of Mother Manon's suspicions by swearing he would let his nose be cut off if Colin did not pay three hundred livres for the broken cup. He also went with Mother Manon to talk with Father Jerome about the marriage, and impressed upon him the necessity of earnestly setting before Marietta her duty as an obedient daughter in not opposing the will of her mother. This the pious old man promised, although he understood not the half of what they shouted in his ear.

When Monday morning came Mother Manon said to her daughter: "Dress yourself handsomely, and carry this myrtle wreath to Father Jerome; he wants it for a bride." Marietta dressed herself in her Sunday clothes, took the myrtle wreath unsuspiciously, and carried it to Father Jerome.

On the way Colin met her, and greeted her joyfully, though timidly; and when she told him where she was taking the wreath, Colin said: "I am going the same way, for I am carrying the money for the church's tenths to the priest." And as they went on he took her hand silently, and both trembled as if they designed some crime against each other.

"Hast thou forgiven me?" whispered Colin, anxiously. "Ah! Marietta, what have I done to thee, that thou art so cruel toward me?"

She could only say: "Be quiet, Colin, you shall have the ribbon again; and I will preserve the cup since it came from you! Did it really come from you?"

"Ah! Marietta, canst thou doubt it? All I have I would gladly give thee. Wilt thou, hereafter, be as kind to me as thou art to others?"

She replied not. But as she entered the parsonage she looked aside at him, and when she saw his fine eyes filled with tears, she whispered softly: "Dear Colin!" Then he bent down and kissed her hand. With this the door of a chamber opened and Father Jerome, with venerable aspect, stood before them. The young couple held fast to each other. I know not whether this was the effect of the hand-kissing, or the awe they felt for the sage.

Marietta handed him the myrtle wreath. He laid it upon her head and said: "Little children, love one another;" and then urged the good maiden, in the most touching and pathetic manner, to love Colin. For the old gentleman, from his hardness of hearing, had either mistaken the name of the bridegroom, or forgotten it, and thought Colin must be the bridegroom.

Then Marietta's heart softened under the exhortation, and with tears and sobs she exclaimed: "Ah! I have loved him for a long time, but he hates me."

"I hate thee, Marietta?" cried Colin. "My soul has lived only in thee since thou camest to Napoule. Oh! Marietta, how could I hope and believe that thou didst love me? Does not all Napoule worship thee?"

"Why, then, dost thou avoid me, Colin, and prefer all my companions before me?"

"Oh! Marietta, I feared and trembled with love and anxiety when I beheld thee; I had not the courage to approach thee; and when I was away from thee I was most miserable."

As they talked thus with each other the good father thought they were quarreling; and he threw his arms around them, brought them together, and said imploringly: "Little children, love one another."

Then Marietta sank on Colin's breast, and Colin threw his arms around her, and both faces beamed with rapture. They forgot the priest, the whole world. Each was sunk into the other. Both had so completely lost their recollection that, unwittingly, they followed the delightful Father Jerome into the church and before the altar.

"Marietta!" sighed he.

"Colin!" sighed she.

In the church there were many devout worshipers; but they witnessed Colin's and Marietta's marriage with amazement. Many ran out before the close of the ceremony, to spread the news throughout Napoule: Colin and Marietta are married."

When the solemnization was over, Father Jerome rejoiced that he had succeeded so well, and that such little opposition had been made by the parties. He led them into the parsonage.

Then Mother Manon arrived, breathless; she had waited at home a long time for the bridegroom. He had not arrived. At the last stroke of the clock she grew anxious and went to Monsieur Hautmartin's. There a new surprise awaited her. She learned that the Governor, together with the officers of the Viguerie, had appeared and taken possession of the accounts, chests, and papers of the justice and at the same time arrested Monsieur Hautmartin.

"This, surely, is the work of that wicked Colin," thought she, and hurried to the parsonage in order to apologize to Father Jerome for delaying the marriage. The good gray-headed old man advanced toward her, proud of his work, and leading by the hand the newly married pair.

Now Mother Manon lost her wits and her speech in good earnest when she learned what had happened. But Colin had more thoughts and power of speech than in his whole previous life. He told of his

love and the broken cup, the falsehood of the justice, and how he had unmasked this unjust magistrate in the Viguerie at Grasse. Then he besought Mother Manon's blessing, since all this had happened without any fault on the part of Marietta or himself.

Father Jerome, who for a long while could not make out what had happened, when he received a full explanation of the marriage through mistake, piously folded his hands and exclaimed, with uplifted eyes: "Wonderful are the dispensations of Providence!" Colin and Marietta kissed his hands; Mother Manon, through sheer veneration of heaven, gave the young couple her blessing, but remarked incidentally that her head seemed turned round.

Mother Manon herself was pleased with her son-in-law when she came to know the full extent of his property, and especially when she found that Monsieur Hautmartin and his nose had been arrested.

"But am I then really a wife?" asked Marietta; "and really Colin's wife?"

Mother Manon nodded her head, and Marietta hung upon Colin's arm. Thus they went to Colin's farm, to his dwelling-house, through the garden.

"Look at the flowers, Marietta," said Colin; "how carefully I cultivated them for your cup!"

Colin, who had not expected so pleasant an event, now prepared a wedding feast on the spur of the occasion. Two days was it continued. All Napoule was feasted. Who shall describe Colin's extravagance?

The broken cup is preserved in the family to the present day as a memorial and sacred relic.

CASTLE NEIDECK

BY WILHELM HEINRICH VON RIEHL



Popular wherever German is read, Riehl ought to be more than a mere name among readers of English. In "Castle Neideck" there is the old-world atmosphere, the truth to nature, the originality, the seriousness of aim, lightened with a sly humor, that characterize all the writings of this most important author—including his histories of culture and morals. Of his culture novels in general the author himself says: "The problem of the historical novel is to display upon the background of social conditions freely modeled characters"—and of "Castle Neideck" in particular: "It is entirely imaginative, based on a study of the times."

Riehl was born in 1823 at Biebrich, near Wiesbaden. His father was Castle Administrator of the place, and undoubtedly prototype of the old schoolmaster in Castle Neideck, as, by his son's own account, Burg Reichenberg, near St. Goarshausen, was prototype of Castle Neideck itself. In 1880 Riehl was ennobled, and died in 1897.



CASTLE NEIDECK

BY WILHELM VON RIEHL

IN Germany there are several castles of the name of Neideck, but, doubtless, the most beautiful is that of the principality of Westerau, whose proud ruins looked down from the steep slate rock over the broad plain of the Felber Valley, and far beyond to the heights of the Dill Mountains.

On the slope of the mountains nestles the little village of Westerau: the site of the new castle. At the time of the Seven Years' War a part of this was habitable, but even then most of it was roofless and a ruin. At the back the castle was open, but the front was protected by a moat and a drawbridge.

Fixed upon the rock like the nest of some gigantic bird, Neideck was considered a strong, though not impregnable, fortress. It was garrisoned by three men: a sergeant and two common soldiers; all three were disabled. The sole defense of the fortress, one old cannon, thundered above the valley on the prince's birthday and whenever a princess gave birth to a child. It is hard to tell why there was a garrison at all; probably for no other reason than because it had not been withdrawn; the three men had been left by a previous garrison as the ruins had been left by a previous castle. The veterans served at Neideck be-

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cause they could not serve elsewhere. Was not that reason enough? The three men had a roof to cover them, good air, and few expenses.

Besides the garrison, one other, the schoolmaster, lived in the castle. He was Philip Balzer, called "Burg" Balzer (Fortress Balzer) to distinguish him from all other Balzers of that locality. Burg Balzer's quarters were in the keeper's lodge, near the gate, and in his quarters he kept school. The parish consisted of twelve thatched cottages, standing at the foot of the hill of Neideck. It was too poor to provide a regular schoolhouse, so the prince graciously permitted the schoolmaster to use the lodge for that purpose, which answered very well. In all there were about ten scholars, and these were huddled together like sheep in a thunderstorm.

Philip's father had been herdsman as well as schoolmaster: the office had descended from father to son; but now there were so few cattle that a child could watch them, and Philip detailed his laziest pupil for that duty. From a pedagogic standpoint the practise was of questionable value, for, as in summer, children prefer the open air, why, every child made efforts to be the laziest.

The schoolmaster and the garrison would have been happy but for the fact that their chief necessities, food and drink, were insufficient. Their quarters were dry, the air was bracing, and their clothes appeared to be imperishable.

This calm was broken by bad news. With November of 1757 the tide of war came in upon them. From

the watch-towers they heard the distant roar of cannon, while the fugitive peasants could see the Prussian soldiers foraging not far away. What could Neideck do? The men of the garrison held a council; the sergeant suggested blowing up the castle; one of the soldiers counseled honorable surrender; the other advised immediate flight. The schoolmaster, who had been invited to the council, urged resistance to the death; resistance to the point of annihilation.

During the evening of November 13 a chasseur galloped up the mountainside with orders to "Retire to the other side of the Schwarzach, and there join the imperial army! Take all arms and commissary stores; destroy everything that can not be transported!"

The orders pleased the garrison; there was little to take away and nothing to destroy. But the cannon! What could they do with that? It had no wheels; they could not draw it after them; and, as there were no oxen in the village, they could not haul it.

"Let us spike it!" said the sergeant; "that is done in wartime." But how? He did not know. To blow it up might be dangerous. Finally they followed the advice of the schoolmaster. The well was two hundred feet deep, and within the memory of man it had never held water. They dropped the cannon into the well.

When they were setting out, the sergeant asked the schoolmaster where they should find the Schwarzach. The schoolmaster gave the desired information; critical pedagogy is supposed to follow the principle that it is better to give any answer than to confess ignorance.

The schoolmaster refused to abandon the fortress: he watched the soldiers sorrowfully as they marched down the hill and disappeared like fantoms in the silence and the darkness. "They will not return," he mused; "I am now the sole keeper of the fort!" He drew the bridge, barred the gates, and went into his lodge.

For a long time he had been laying in provisions: apples, nuts, prunes, bread, bacon, and smoked beef. These, with an old dressing gown and "Gottsched's Critical Art of Poetry," he carried to the western slope of the hill. He waited an instant, listening, turning his head in all directions, to make sure that he was alone, for the night was dark and he could see nothing; then he climbed over a broken wall, parted the thick branches of a thorn-bush, and crawled through an opening into an underground passage choked with rubbish.

This passage was known only to Burg Balzer. He had found it in his youth. In a place where the passage widened he had made a bed of leaves, and, lying there on rainy days, many an hour, for many years, he had dreamed his dreams. He loved to dream of the days of knighthood; and the dim light of his hiding-place gave atmosphere to his illusions. At times he had worked hard to clear away the rubbish and penetrate deeper under ground. Philip thought he might find wine here. Strange things had been found before this in secret passages! In the abandoned cellar of a castle in Alsatia ancient wine had been found; the casks had rotted and dropped apart, but the old

wine had formed a skin. As he went alone, Philip decided to hide in his grotto and wait for the first shock of war to pass; he should be safer down there than with the fugitive peasants in the woods. It was romance as well as common sense that led him to hide there. Philip Balzer was a German schoolmaster. "I am Burg Balzer," he said to himself; "this is my castle! I must be faithful; I must stand or fall with this stronghold. I am the real warder, and to guard Neideck is my heritage. Let the Prussians blow it up and me with it! Better, far better, to wing my flight thus than to forsake my trust!"

To tell the exact truth, Burg Balzer was not at all afraid that he should be blown up; from an old legend he had learned that destiny had marked him for important work; he was to restore prosperity to Neideck. Neideck, the ancestral home of the princes of Westerau, had been occupied by the family until the Thirty Years' War broke out. But on the approach of the imperial army the princes had escaped, leaving a strong garrison, and the peasants of the whole country had taken refuge there. From that time onward Neideck had been known as a stronghold. "And, in truth," said the schoolmaster, "it has always been a fortress; it has never been a robbers' nest."

There was one stain on the record, however. In the dark year, 1634, when the castle was packed with fugitives, and provisions ran low, the commandant of the fortress ordered his men to drive out the women and the children, in order to "shut out useless mouths." The victims fell upon their knees and begged for

mercy; they cried out that they had no other refuge. The commandant was deaf to their prayers. When the gates closed behind them, the women cursed Neideck. Three of the curses were remembered.

First—Let Neideck be a ruin, and let every stone of that ruin bear witness against Neideck's lord!

Second—One hundred years shall pass before a lord of Neideck wins a woman's love!

Third—To the shame of man, when all men are powerless, let Neideck be saved by a woman!

The first two curses were already fulfilled. Soon after the lord of Neideck had abandoned the women and children to their fate, the castle was stormed, the east wing was destroyed, and the once powerful fortress fell into ruins. After that the reigning family lived in the new castle in Westerau; not one of them returned to Neideck. For a time governors and warders kept the castle; not one of them was blessed by a woman's love. Some of them lived and died unmarried; two had lost their wives; while the only man among them all who had a wife was so tormented by her that he cut his throat. The third curse was yet to come; namely, after all the men had failed to save Neideck, the place was to be redeemed by a woman.

Now, the schoolmaster, though not a woman, believed that he was destined in some way to fulfill the curse and be the means of saving the castle, and in such a way as to bring about perfect harmony.

Philip's dreams were so ardent and so bold that he dared not speak of them or even think about them. It was hope that made him cling to the castle; that

dispelled all fear. He lived on dreams as much as on his prunes and bacon.

Lying on his bed of leaves the second day after the garrison's departure, he detected the smell of burning stubble. "It is the village!" he thought calmly, and continued his dream. He heard cannon, now near, now far away, and he heard other sounds, too: the clash of arms, the pounding of horses' hoofs, then silence fell—.

He had been underground two days and two nights; he was tired of prunes and bacon, and of lying down and of sitting still. Early in the morning he crept out. Just as he reached the thorn-bush he heard the rustling of leaves, and, peering out, he saw a goat tossing his head and nibbling the last leaves of the late autumn. The village lay in the distance, calm and peaceful in the morning light; nor far, nor near, was there a sign of war.

Tempted by the mellow sunlight, the schoolmaster left his hiding-place, and saw that the peasants were returning with their chattels to the deserted homes. He skirted the hill and entered the village from the opposite side of the castle. In the village he learned that the soldiers had not entered Neideck. The peasants blushed for their fears; they had suffered cold and hunger in the woods; so had their cattle. The camp-followers, finding the place deserted, had fired the fields. Now the damages must be repaired! The peasants praised the schoolmaster for his prudence; they said he had done well to remain in the castle. Philip was modest; he disclaimed their praises; he lauded the castle—"a stronghold even in its ruin!"

There is not a man on earth who has not faith in something! Burg Balzer had faith in his castle.

II

On February 15, 1763, twelve couriers galloped out of the courtyard of Hubertsburgh, and, blowing their trumpets, rode hard in every direction toward all the respective courts, announcing that the peace treaty had been signed. A squadron of mounted messengers followed them, proclaiming peace throughout the Roman Empire of the German nation. The Seven Years' War was over, and the fortress of Neideck could now rest for generations to come. No more would the thunder of distant cannon echo through the tower; nor need the schoolmaster fear for his castle. He was thankful for peace; glad that they called it the peace of Hubertsburgh, for that place, he thought, must be a little like my own Neideck. And now Burg Balzer reigned supreme in Neideck; the garrison did not return; the veterans' quarters went to ruin; the roof fell in. Philip rejoiced; to his mind ruins were unclaimed property. "And," thought he, "unclaimed property belongs to him who takes it!" It seemed to him that the giant ruin was now his own. It may be that he could not have borne the trials of his dry profession had it not been for the mystic charm of his castle. It was his castle that made life sweet to him. When the day was fine he kept school in the courtyard. The elder-bush was in blossom; the blue sky floated above the crumbling walls; the jackdaws circled above

the towers; the sparrows twittered. He was happy; the dreams of his childhood nested in his heart, and the droning *a, b, c* of the mischievous boys sounded to him like a spring song.

Now and then he permitted the children to sing a hymn, and when the old walls sent back the echoes the hymn was as full of meaning as a fugue, and the days of old with their men of blood and iron rose before him, while the discord in the shrill voices of the children ascended to the skies like songs of praise. Of all hymns Philip loved best Luther's "*A mighty fortress is our God!*" When the hymn was ended, when the last thin cry of the children had died away upon the air, Balzer would explain to them that the stronghold, or fortress, was man's best type of the power and eternal protection of God; and that God's fidelity to man could not be represented better than by the image of a stronghold. Once when an impertinent pupil reminded him that their own stronghold, the fortress of Neideck, was going to ruin, and that new ravages were visible every spring, Philip answered:

"If our stronghold shows weakness here and there, it does so that we may see by the contrasting strength of its main walls and its foundations that it was built for all eternity. That is why a stronghold is a true image of the eternal being of God. It was in strongholds that Luther worked; he wrote his hymn in the fortress of Coburg and translated the Bible in the fortress of Wartburg.

When the day was fine he took his flute, and played it as he went down the east side of the mountain, fol-

lowed by the children. Often the teacher and his pupils wandered into the woods opposite the castle. There Philip played his flute and the children sang and the echoes answered, and there the schoolmaster told the stories of all the strongholds in the country; not one of them was as remarkable as that of Neideck!

On rainy days he kept school in the small dark lodge; the lessons were then short, and when the children had gone home, Balzer would go down into the dungeon or up into the watch-towers. The towers rose high above the mass of stone and overlooked the country. A rotten bridge stretched from the top of one tower to the top of the other. To reach the first Philip had to go to an upper story of the adjoining building; and to reach the second, where the tormented husband had cut his throat, he was forced to cross this bridge. Balancing his thin body on the decaying timbers, far above the broken roof of the castle, buffeted by the tempest and in peril of his life, Burg Balzer would shout strange and meaningless words, which he supposed were in the language of the ancient Teutons: "*Heia, Weia, Weigala, Waia!*" In his mind he was a warder of the far-off bygone days; the enemy was on its way to Neideck, winding up through the ravines of the Drill Mountains, and his cry was raised to warn the men within his castle. It was as difficult to get back to reality as it was to climb the bridge!

Long before the war the schoolmaster had found some old straw and fragments of a jug. Had the

straw been the bed of the last prisoner of the dungeon? and what of the jug? Balzer was tender-hearted, but it would have pleased him to find proof that the man of his imagination had starved to death on the straw, drinking his last, unwholesome draft from the jug.

From brooding over his relics he went aloft, climbing from one roofless room to another. In the "Hall of the Knights" he rested from his efforts. Up there the arches had given way, and bits of stone and clouds of lime-dust were sifted by the decaying joists. In the "Hall of the Knights" he could fancy that he was exchanging opinions and drinking wine with all the nobles of the ancient principality. From his conference with the nobles he returned to his poor quarters, wet to the skin, alternately shivering and burning with fever, and ate his crust and sipped cold water and was content—far happier, perhaps, than the knights had been over their bumpers.

Now and then, but not often, the pastor or some students and teachers would visit the castle, and then Balzer was their guide. He knew the story of every wall and of every crevice. If visitors gave him a few kreutzers he was grateful. He would drop them in his little savings bank, knowing that he should need money in accomplishing the work appointed by destiny. One day when Mosenbruch, the learned compiler of dictionaries, visited the castle, he disputed Balzer's historical data; after some discussion the savant said that no woman could save the castle because there was no castle left to save. Philip was too angry to answer. When Mosenbruch was ready to depart he offered his

gift. Philip rejected it. "I will not accept it," he thought; "the money of the castle fund must come to me from unstained hands, the hands of people who respect the castle."

III

Now the peasants loved the schoolmaster because he made the children love the school. Philip was grateful for their appreciation, but he denied that he deserved it. "I rule the village and the children by the power of the stronghold; personally I deserve nothing!" he said firmly.

Sunday, when the day was fine, the youths and maidens flocked to the castle, followed by their elders, and, sitting before the castle, talked and sang. Philip told them stories of the stronghold, and taught them songs: "Lindenschmied," "Schüttensam," "Falkenstein," the "Castle in Austria," and "Anne of Brittany." The people of the neighboring villages, too, knowing what was passing on the heights, followed those of Neideck, and then they would all sing together, the strangers declaring that to sit in the courtyard of Neideck was far pleasanter than to sit around the public wells in their own villages. Among the visitors was Lizzie, the daughter of Röderbauer of Steinfurt. Röderbauer was a rich peasant; Lizzie was his only child. She was strong and healthy, twenty years old, and renowned for her beautiful blond hair—hair so long that she could sit upon it!

While Philip told his stories, Lizzie gazed upon him with wide-open eyes and half-open mouth, thinking

what a wonderful man Burg Balzer must be to know so much more than all the people round about. And yet he was the "poor devil" of the parish! It pleased Lizzie to think how wise he was, but it grieved her to think how poor he was; she longed to do something to help him. Philip was not slow to note that Lizzie was constant in her visits. Every Sunday he saw her blond hair and her pretty face, and it was not long before he began to think of her night and day. In his mind he addressed himself to her when he told his romantic stories to the people; he gave her solos to sing; he sang duets with her. At first they were friends, then their friendship got to be known as a "love affair," and finally, without any one knowing it, one day they exchanged promises. It was a secret; but it was a betrothal nevertheless. Though such things happen in other places as well as in old castles, Philip was sure that his happiness had come through the influences of his castle. When he appeared before Röderbauer of Steinfurt to ask for his daughter, Röderbauer replied: "While I live my daughter shall not get one kreutzer from me! When I am dead she may do as she pleases!"

As Röderbauer was not far beyond the age of forty, and as he had never been sick, not even for a day, it was plain enough that if Lizzie waited for his death she would not at that time be a very lively bride. However, Burg Balzer, knowing the character of rich peasants, knew that Röderbauer was not to be moved. Strong in his love, he was equally strong in his devotion to his castle; Philip turned from Lizzie to his writ-

ings. "I will finish my history of Neideck," he thought bravely, and so as time went on he saved his money and wrote his history.

Of publishers' methods or of authors' chances he knew nothing. Röderbauer respected money and cared nothing for fame—and yet—and yet!— Balzer knew it would be by this book he would gain his wife. Lizzie loved him; since the curse fell he had been the first warder of Neideck to win the love of woman; so Lizzie was the woman predestined to save the castle! How it should come to pass he knew not; he felt that he was but an instrument; *it was to be*. Meanwhile he could love in secret and write history in secret, and that was enough!

His appeal to Röderbauer had separated him from his betrothed, and as he now saw her seldom he had more time to devote to his writing. So resignation and patience and the strength to endure his disappointment all came from the castle.

He had written and copied fifty folio sheets when one day the inspector of schools visited Neideck. Philip had no cause to fear the visit. In fine weather he had been sending the laziest pupil to the pasture, but when the weather was bad they all flocked to the school, where they drank in his teachings, and consequently knew more than the children of other places. The inspector was an antiquary. After the examination the two men—the master and his chief—crawled like beetles through the ruins. The inspector listened as in a dream, while Philip, poorest of all his teachers, told the story of the stronghold. The inspector's in-

terest filled the mystic with ecstasy, and in his excitement he, Balzer, the most timid of men, found courage to show his manuscript. With hands trembling, with face flushed, he gave it to the inspector.

Twenty different conjectures concerning the meaning of the name "Neideck." All very plausible.

And the conclusion was that the name did not signify after all: *eck* (a corner) where *neid* (envy) dwelt, but a corner to be envied by all who could not live in it—*Neideck*. The inspector admired Philip's handwriting: the conjectural structure was somewhat uncertain; but on that foundation Balzer had raised an edifice bolder than the architecture of the double towers. The literary form of the manuscript was most original, for, although Balzer had never studied literature, his writing came as the spirit inspired it. Philip's castle had taught him how to write.

At that time Rousseau's "Emile" was the book of the hour. The inspector was an ardent follower of Jean Jacques, and he found that the active principle of the history of Neideck was the principle of the work of Rousseau. Though Balzer had never heard of Rousseau, yet all the former's methods, so it seemed to the inspector, showed the instinctive practise of the philanthropic system of education. The analogy was so complete that Rousseau's book, that formed the chief intellectual diet of the advocates of "sentimental, enlightened pedagogy," might readily pass as a very natural and complete supplement to the work of Balzer. The inspector's opinion brought tears to Philip's eyes. "Good night," he called back graciously; and

Philip watched him as he disappeared farther and farther down the slope of the mountain.

"*Good night!* What a day it has been! I have been happy!" thought Philip—and for that, too, he thanked his castle.

IV

Four weeks after the inspector's visit a letter came for Balzer. He was offered the school at Ottenheim. Ottenheim lay in the rich district of teeming pastures—"the butter district." So the school was twice as important as that of Neideck. That same evening, too, a neighbor stopped at the castle to offer Balzer his congratulations on another "streak of luck," the death of Röderbauer. Röderbauer had climbed a tree to pick cherries to make his celebrated cordial; he had fallen from the tree and been picked up dead. Delicacy impelled Balzer to deny that he saw luck in Röderbauer's death, but in his heart he knew that the event would make his own life easier, and he could not find any excuse for attributing this last blessing to his castle.

He gave his pupils a three days' vacation and set off for Ottenheim, wondering if it would be possible to live so far from Neideck. He was not sure of this. As he passed the new castle, the home of the heirs and owners of Neideck, a smile of pity flitted over his lips. What a fall; from Neideck to Westerau! History had made Neideck glorious; Westerau had no history! A prince may build a castle, but even Omnipotence can not give ancestry to an unfledged baron!— Philip

was shocked; pride in his castle had caused him to blaspheme; he had cast a doubt upon Omnipotence!

Driving back these confusing thoughts, he went on across the crest of the Drill Mountains, that looked down upon the broad green plains, the well-kept, regularly measured meadows, the corn-fields swaying in the wind, and the highway lined with fruit trees. Set on the verdant, gold-flecked carpet rested the villages with red-tiled roofs. The church spires were glittering in the sunlight. But it was tame! There were no woods, no rocks, no stronghold. Not a ruin! The long stretch of level land oppressed him, but he went on. Arrived at Ottenheim, he saw the schoolroom; large, light, limewashed. The windows looked out on a playground; from the ground sprang four slim young lindens; they looked like brooms standing on their sticks. His heart quailed. Homesick dread filled his soul. How could he live and teach in such a place? He turned and fled.

At Steinfurt he stopped to salute the girl with the long, fair hair. In her black dress, her long lashes wet with tears, Lizzie was even prettier than when she had visited Neideck. In his dust-stained traveling coat (he had no other) Philip followed Röderbauer's coffin to the grave—and the peasants envied him.

After the funeral he talked of the future with his betrothed. His appointment to Ottenheim pleased the girl, but she knew that she had money enough now to build in Neideck. Philip declared that he would never live in the butter district, where there were no woods,

no rocks, no strongholds. His future, a great future, lay in Neideck. He knew it.

"Such talk is foolish," answered Lizzie, and they quarreled; the girl told him that she would never live in the lodge. She called the castle "old and ugly." She refused to marry him. Philip protested that he would die a bachelor rather than go to Ottenheim. He reminded Lizzie of her visits to Neideck and of the beauty of the castle. Lizzie answered: "I did not go there to see the castle; I went there to see you." That was too much! Philip set off for Neideck cut to the heart. But he was not rash; he gave her time to think it over. After two weeks he returned to Steinfurt—and again they quarreled. "Whoever takes me must take my castle!" said Philip; and Lizzie answered: "If you do not love me more than you love the castle, I do not want you!" Philip's heart was heavy; Lizzie thought less of the matter. Pride was mingled with Philip's sorrow. "The castle has done so much for me," thought he; "it has made me what I am. Even if I have to renounce my love to keep my trust, I must be faithful." So he declined the offer of Ottenheim and continued to appear before the world as the poorest of the schoolmasters, the head of the smallest school in Germany.

V

From the eastern wing of the Renaissance Castle in Westerau the view over the Felber Valley was beautiful; far off one could see the rocky height where the towers of Castle Neideck rose against the horizon.

In that wing resided Princess Isabella, the ruling prince's younger daughter, with her lady-in-waiting, Fräulein von Martigny.

The young Princess, only eighteen years old, often gazed longingly toward those ancestral towers, wishing she were there, to look far out over the open country, and then to travel through it, on and on and on. Here, in her father's castle, with its aristocratic ennui, she felt as if she were in prison. I wonder which is the greater torture: a prison window that looks out upon high walls, or one with a beautiful view into the distance? One reminds us every hour that we are imprisoned; the other that we can not get away. And the Princess would have liked so much to fly away, but at her father's court the rules of etiquette were observed as strictly as in a Spanish convent, particularly with regard to ladies. Isabella's sister had entered a convent to escape the monotony of the castle, and in the convent she had been more at ease than in the castle.

There was some analogy between the conditions of the warder of the old castle and the Princess of the new castle. As with all his heart Balzer desired marriage with Lizzie, but would not buy his happiness with the sacrifice of his castle, so with all her heart the Princess of the new castle desired liberty—to be free from her father's house—but she would not buy her liberty by marriage with her cousin, Frederick, Count Vierstein.

Everything slept at Westerau. When Isabella sat in her luxurious room it seemed to her that all four

walls were yawning, and when she walked in the castle garden all the trees seemed to sleep, and the gods and goddesses of stone between the trimmed hedges of hornbeam were surely snoring. She arose in the morning at nine o'clock, because it was necessary for her to rest from the preceding day's ennui, and when they put on her stockings while she was dressing, it often took half an hour to proceed from the right to the left foot.

During the day she was never alone, not one minute; for Fräulein von Martigny, who was not only lady-in-waiting, but took the place of a mother, never left her side. A true feminine Minos in matters of etiquette, the old lady was also nervous and irritable. When the Princess had been washing and bathing during her morning toilet, Fräulein always kept a few steps away, asserting that she would just as easily catch cold by going near a newly washed being as by walking over a newly washed floor.

After the dressing hour came the reading hour. Fräulein read aloud, in French, only classical authors from the time of Louis the Great, and the very cadence of the verses seemed to produce sleep. Then followed the painting lesson. Court-painter Timothy Niedermeyer taught the Princess to paint in water-colors, and every one in the family received a bouquet in water-colors as a birthday gift. This Niedermeyer had a fine talent, but had become a mannerist. This also was the result of ennui, for by princely decree he had every year to deliver, in return for his salary, twenty-four oil paintings, mostly family portraits.

There were portraits of the Princess at all ages, in every possible position and costume; the most recent pictures showed her as an angel with wings, among clouds; as an eighteen-year-old girl, blowing soap-bubbles into the air, and as a shepherdess with crook, leading a sheep by a red ribbon; these three pictures had been sent to Vierstein, as gifts for the intended bridegroom. The Princess was, in truth, beautiful, but her life of utter seclusion had given to her face the soft, languid beauty of a hothouse flower, and as the artist, with a wish to flatter, had over-refined the delicate features, the result was that the child-angel-shepherdess head looked utterly expressionless. Ennui is the hunger of the aristocrat; hunger is the ennui of the common people; the painted face of the Princess showed that she had never felt hungry, but very often bored. Isabella was to marry the Count of Vierstein, but did not wish to do so; and the Count of Vierstein would have nothing to do with Isabella, who was to be his bride. They were cousins, had met as children, and Isabella had shed many a tear over the wild boy, whose rough manner frightened and troubled her. Later they lost sight of each other; the Count traveled extensively and entered foreign service. The two fathers had by letter, and on their own responsibility, betrothed their children without consulting those who were most concerned, although the two castles were only a day's journey apart.

They considered such action more suitable to their rank than to permit an engagement from love, as among ordinary people. The fine portraits of the

court-painter were intended to arouse in the reluctant Count some interest for his unwilling bride, but they had the opposite effect. Nor did the half-length portrait of the Count, that arrived at the same time in Westerau, have any better success. This portrait represented the young man as a hussar. Vierstein could not boast of a court-painter—his court being interested only in hunting and the army—so the picture had been painted by a traveling artist, whose vigorous brush had given the poor Count's face a ferocious expression. The Princess was frightened to tears, as she had been when a child. And Fräulein von Martigny made use of this fear to give background to the cousin's bad reputation. She hinted at a certain Potsdam barrack atmosphere that Vierstein carried into sitting-room and bedrooms; that no one over there cared for anything but soldiers, horses, dogs. For in her heart the Fräulein shared Isabella's aversion to this marriage, and would have preferred to see her beloved foster child become an old maid. Then might the Fräulein be to the end of her life Mistress of the Robes at this dear court, whose ennui she was not sensible of, although she did her utmost to promote it.

To be sure the painting and the painting lessons were as tiresome as everything else in the castle, yet a certain dramatic interest was attached to them—an interest that was wofully lacking in the rest of the day's proceedings, which went like clockwork—and all the clocks in the castle were correct. Every day the Prince rode out at the same hour, on the same road, and returned at the same minute. Breakfast was

served at eleven o'clock; at twelve o'clock they held an audience, the Princess as well. Her lady-in-waiting was careful to impress upon her beforehand how to open the conversation. There were only three phrases from which to select; Isabella sometimes wished to add a fourth or fifth, but had not the courage to do so.

They dined at three o'clock. Conversation at table, though the merest gossip, was very solemn. Isabella discovered, in listening to it, that the people in the town could not be quite such bores as were those in the castle, for, at least, they furnished material for conversation. She sometimes wished to become acquainted with the wife of one of the officials or even of a common tradesman, but Fräulein assured her that that would be improper as well as unpleasant. "These common people have such a peculiar odor," she said, taking a double dose of snuff. She always maintained that it was one of the finest traits in the Landgrave of Hesse, that he could not bear the odor of common people.

After dinner the whole party went out for a walk; they proceeded in pairs, the marshal with his staff going before, two chasseurs with their carbines closing the procession. Isabella would have preferred an excursion to Neideck; they had even promised it to her, but they never found time for it. Simply because there was nothing to do, the hours were fully occupied. This never-fulfilled promise increased the Princess's longing to see the charmed Castle of Neideck; it became to her the symbol of freedom, ever alluring, forever unattainable.

After the walk the Prince, following the example of Louis XIV, fed and caressed his numerous dogs. If her father was in an unusually good humor, Isabella received permission to pat the dogs, a thing she hated to do. Afterward Fräulein von Martigny never failed to remind her that as Cousin Frederick owned even a larger number of dogs, as Countess Vierstein she would never be able to get away from dog-atmosphere.

The best comfort of the unfortunate, provided they can sleep, is night. The Princess had a magnificent canopy-bed, with the softest of pillows and the finest silken covers. When a child lies comfortably in its little bed, it is often said to be lying there "like a princess." The saying did not originate with Princess Isabella, for she felt no comfort even in bed. She wished to sleep in the dark, but it was considered proper for her to have a Dutch night-lamp burning in her own bedroom, and a German lamp in the one adjoining, where her maid slept. And from the 15th of October to the 15th of April open fires were kept burning throughout the night in both rooms; such were the palace regulations. So the poor Princess often lay awake, counting the strokes of the big castle clock and of all the other numerous clocks in the rooms, following one another "like clockwork." Her whole young life seemed to her like one long sleepless night.

It was in the month of May. The nights were now growing shorter, fortunately; but Isabella was still awake at one o'clock, staring about her with wide-open eyes. She noticed a small red book on the

window-sill, an unusual sight in these rooms, where nothing was ever left lying about. What kind of a book could it be? All the books in the castle were bound in blue. She slipped out of bed to look at it.

The red cover was in bad taste and overdecorated; the leaves were gilt-edged, but the paper was bad, like blotting paper, and the print was poor and blurred. The title was: "Notable description and history of the princely Castle of Neideck, brought to light by Philip Balzer, schoolmaster and student of the history of his fatherland."

The Princess went to bed again, and, by the light of her very good Dutch night-lamp, began to read this little book. Scarcely had she finished the few pages which treated of the origin and twenty-five meanings of the name "Neideck," when she began to feel drowsy, and when she reached page ten she fell asleep, and slept soundly until late in the morning.

After this she decided to read a little of the book every evening; she also inquired as to whom it belonged and how it came to be in her room.

VI

In due time Burg Balzer finished his "history," and even got it printed, a harder task than the writing. There was only one printing office in the principality, and this belonged to the court bookbinder Zöllner in Westerau. Zöllner, owner also of a toy store and circulating library, printed every year the "Court, State, and House Almanac of Westerau," and this was the

extent of his printing venture; he could never be induced to risk any other literary undertaking. Philip had foreseen that, and offered to cover all necessary expenses with the contents of his savings-box. The castle fund, which had been collecting for twelve years, amounted now to exactly two florins and eighteen kreutzers.¹ But Herr Zöllner was not satisfied. Philip, though surprised that books could cost so much, did not lose courage. He, knowing that peasants pay their rent partly in money and produce the rest in manual labor and labor of their teams, proposed to the bookbinder to pay him by the same method, to write out bills and dunning letters, line school copybooks, and perform other tasks, until all expenses had been paid. The bookbinder agreed, and Balzer, with a heavy sigh, became his publisher's drudge, as also more famous authors have been. Piles of the bookbinder's work were carried to Neideck every Saturday, but the pile of Philip's own book in Westerau remained untouched. Philip bore his burden heroically; he was slaving for his castle, that was enough for Philip. He had not neglected, however, to present some elegantly bound copies to the ruling princes of his own and adjoining lands. At first he expected a few gold snuff-boxes in return, then, at least, some kind acknowledgment by letter; but nothing came.

The Prince of Westerau had given the book to his valet, because it had come uncalled for and not in proper form; all gifts from his subjects, as long as they were of no special value, went the same way.

¹ About eighty cents.

The valet found the book so uninteresting that he passed it on to Isabella's maid. The girl, feeling life at court even more tedious than this book, first read a little in it, then forgot it, leaving it in the Princess's room, where, during a sleepless night, as we have seen, it fell at last into the right hands.

The Princess was glad to hear something more definite about the enchanted castle, and was surprised to read of all the strange events that had taken place there—a small history of the world in itself—and of the numerous historical monuments still in existence there. The French books with which Fräulein von Martigny tormented her every day took her to Rome, Athens, Mexico, and other places, for which she cared nothing; it pleased her at last to be able to read about what was nearest her home, about the mystery upon which she looked out from her own windows. The beginning of the book had a soothing effect, even helped her to sleep; later on it became more interesting, and toward the end quite exciting. Sometimes the author was very comical, just when he wished to be very impressive; but he always meant well, and was very enthusiastic. The Princess became interested in an author who could make her laugh without quite laughing at him. In the preface the writer offers himself as guide to every visitor in Neideck, by day or night, in rain or sunshine; and when Isabella closed the book she was more than willing to have such a guide through the ruins—in moonshine if possible. At times the book spoke like a prophet; for example, on page 112, where it said quite mysteriously: "A man

may build a house or a castle, but this house or castle will build up and mold the man who lives in it. Apparently time has come to a standstill in the old stronghold; but only apparently, for time is not only ever moving, but also moves others; it moves the castle toward growth and age. The castle is really a living being, mysteriously connected with the fate of the ruling family, of the country, and perhaps also with the fate of a humble subject, who does not yet reveal his identity. These ruins have their spirit; not a ghost, but *the* spirit of the castle, put into it by every one who, led by some vague impulse, approaches in all sincerity so mighty a monument, receiving back from it in higher potency what all have put there. In this way the curses of the poor evicted women have become reality; two of these curses are already fulfilled, and the third will surely come to pass when the predestined lady of the castle appears, to bring for the first time after a hundred years love and blessing, to save the castle, and put men to shame. Who is this noble lady, and when will she appear?" With this question the book closed. As mentioned before, the Princess was much excited by these words. Until now, to feel bored and to marry her hateful cousin seemed to be her only vocation in life. The first she was not responsible for, the second she intended to be fully responsible for. But now she began to wonder if she were not called upon to save the castle? It was not quite clear to her what there was about it to be saved, but that did not matter. She had found her vocation in life: she was going to save something. To begin with, she must first see the castle.

A new spirit of insubordination awoke in her. Was it not her natural right to see the home of her ancestors? and why should she be defrauded of that right? For the first time she studied her own situation, without prejudice, as a matter of principle, and she discovered that she was kept imprisoned, led by leading-strings, bored, and made stupid. "The house molds the person," she had read. Yes, indeed, the gilded cage of this tiresome castle had made a puppet of her. But that was over now. A strong spirit of defiance began to stir in that pretty head; Rousseau's spirit was filling her, too, with fire and flame, and all this through the influence of poor Burg Balzer, who knew nothing at all about Rousseau.

It was just at this time, when the first storm of rebellion was shaking the Princess's world of thought, that the arrangements for her marriage were to be completed. The visit by the young Count had been announced three times, and three times apologies had been sent for his not coming. The young man, just returned from his travels, could not be induced to go to Westerau; he shuddered when he remembered the days he had spent there as a child. In spite of this reluctance, unflattering and unpromising as it was, the two fathers remained firm, and the young people had to submit. The Princess, though hoping the Count would remain at Blocksberg, was yet annoyed that he did not care to see her. She declared to her father that she would say "No!" even on the steps of the altar, and that no power on earth could make her go to Vierstein. Such open rebellion had never been

known before, while the reasons with which Isabella supported her right to a voice in the matter were simply unthinkable. The Prince ceased to recognize his gentle daughter. He sent for her responsible guardian, Fräulein von Martigny, to hear what she had to say about this paroxysm of revolt. The frightened lady told him that she *had* noticed a certain obstinacy and extravagance in Isabella for several days; it had worried her greatly, but she had not been able to discover the cause. The Prince, accustomed to have everything settled according to his wishes promptly and definitely, now commanded Fräulein von Martigny to take Isabella for a walk in the garden. Within an hour he would look for the report that Isabella had been brought to her senses.

But instead of coming to an understanding, the two ladies had a serious quarrel; they did not raise their voices; their gestures were quite within the rules of finest etiquette; but underneath it all poisoned arrows and sharp thrusts were exchanged.

They had been walking for more than half an hour up and down, under the orange trees in front of the castle, when suddenly they heard a confused sound of angry voices coming from the gate. The two ladies stopped: a man with long hair *sans* powder and cue, in shabby clothes, half rustic, half citified-looking, was trying to enter the castle, while footmen were driving him back. He held a petition in his hand, and kept calling out: "I must see the Prince! I *must* see the Prince!" The footmen told him that it was impossible, and would have quickly overpowered him

when, seeing the Princess, the man broke loose and ran straight toward the ladies.

"Gracious Princess!" he cried, quite out of breath. "I am the schoolmaster of Neideck! Help me! I must speak to your father, the Prince! Danger is threatening!"

In great indignation Fräulein von Martigny drew the Princess away, and the servants again laid hands on the excited man. But when Isabella heard his name, she actually ordered the footmen to release him. 'At such independence on Isabella's part, Fräulein stood like a statue turned to stone. Isabella now asked the schoolmaster for an explanation. His words were not courtier-like, but they sounded all the more natural for that. "Imagine, Princess!" he said, "the castle of Neideck is to be demolished, blown up, leveled to the ground. It was the steward who suggested it, and the Prince has given his assent. They will begin work next week. Think of it! The home of your ancestors, the country's stronghold, the most beautiful edifice—in one word, Neideck is to fall! And what makes the blow still more unbearable is the fact that it is I who am the cause of it, I, who put the plan into the steward's head! In my history of the castle—"

"I have read it," interrupted the Princess, smiling graciously, while a smirk of pleased authorship passed over Philip's rapt features. He continued:

"In my history I explained the name of the Hasen Tower; perhaps you know that the present steward Haas is a grandson of the one who cut his throat in one of the sooms there. I had to tell all that, for

truth is the first duty of the historian, nothing but truth; the man who tells only half the truth is a liar through and through. Well, the steward is angry, and says that I have insulted his grandfather in his grave; and that I did it in print, moreover, which is worse. He wished to dismiss me from my position as teacher, but the inspector, my kind protector, interfered. Now, as the steward can not send me away, he has determined that the castle shall be destroyed. He alleges that it interferes with the traffic. The traffic! Why, you can't find any traffic over there, even if you searched for it with spectacles. He asserts, too, that it gives shelter to tramps—I am the only one who lives there; that it threatens to collapse of itself any day. Well, then, if that is the case, why does he want to demolish it? But those are idle pretexts; the true reason is his grandfather's suicide. See how one evil deed leads to another! The Prince has agreed only because he has been falsely informed. But I will explain everything to his Highness. If that stronghold were destroyed, it would be a disgrace to the whole land, and it would be not only my fault, but my death, too! Help me to an audience, gracious Princess, an immediate audience with the Prince!" Fräulein von Martigny called the footmen back and told them to take that mad fellow away, but Isabella interposed: "My dear schoolmaster, follow me!" Making a graceful motion with her fan, she advanced to the entrance-hall and up the stairway, Balzer following with head erect. In the mean while Fräulein was calling for *eau de lavande*, fell in a swoon, so the

footmen had to support her instead of the schoolmaster.

The Princess was taking a bold course; but one who breaks the chain is stronger than one who has never worn it. When Isabella entered her father's room, the Prince thought she had come, dutifully as usual, to submit herself to his will, with the lady who had influenced her following. How astonished he was to see Burg Balzer's face instead of Fräulein von Martigny's! He gave the imprudent man one piercing look, whereupon Isabella began at once to explain, describing in a few words the whole scene, and begging mercy for the castle, while Balzer fell on his knees and, holding his petition aloft, cried: "Mercy! Mercy!"

With great self-possession the Prince touched the bell. When the valet entered, the Prince ordered him to see that this impertinent intruder of a schoolmaster leave the castle at once. It was done.

Alone with his daughter, he gave her a sharp lecture. Isabella acknowledged that his reproaches were just, but was not her intercession for the castle also just? She unfolded her reasons with such enthusiasm that the old Prince listened in astonishment to an eloquence never before suspected in his daughter. Fired by the spirit of Philip's book, she saw in the castle a living being, and prophesied that in vain would remorse follow its destruction, as if one were to kill a man and then call in the doctor.

But the Prince was inexorable. Though Isabella's eloquence had made a strong impression upon him, it was also quite different from the one intended. He

could not help thinking that if the Count only saw the girl thus passionately excited he would like her better than he had heretofore; he remembered, from times long past, that young people admire strong passion. This led to another thought—only he was not quite sure that it would be proper to express it. He said at last in his coldest voice: "If you care so much for the castle, let us exchange. I give you the castle and you give me your 'Yes' for the Count!"

But now the Princess burned in righteous indignation. She called it a shameless proposition, and affirmed that she would never marry her cousin.

It was her last word. Her father, too, had nothing more to say. The family jar was over.

After that events moved quickly. The Prince gave orders that for criminally breaking the peace of the princely household and of the palace the mad schoolmaster of Neideck must leave the castle within twenty-four hours. Furthermore, the demolition of the castle must commence as soon as possible. The Princess, too, was ordered to her own room for an indefinite time, and the strictest watchfulness exacted from her lady-in-waiting, for the unfortunate girl had shown traces of a mental disorder that could be cured only by a life of utter seclusion. As Count Vierstein was expected on the following Sunday, the Prince wished, by any means, to prepare Isabella for his coming, and thus to awaken love for him in her heart. His orders were promptly executed. The dismissed schoolmaster disappeared from his little house. He had not left the castle, however, for he was hiding in the secret vault,

where in the year 1757 he had faced the siege without besiegers. There he spent all his days and nights, except in the evening, when he would steal out into the village, and the peasants would give him something to eat, keeping the matter a profound secret, so that the steward should not continue to persecute him.

The mental condition of the poor schoolmaster, formerly so happy and content, was pitiful. He never thought of his own misery, only of the ruin that threatened the castle, all through his fault. He had renounced his love, only to bring ruin to the castle; collected the fund, only to see the castle demolished; written his history—to have those glorious towers of Neideck blown up! Tormented by remorse, he made up his mind, if it should ever really come to *that*, he would be at the bridge leading to the Hasen Tower at the right moment.

VII

Princess Isabella, too, was not enjoying a very happy time of it. For six days she did not see a human being save her maid and Fräulein von Martigny. That old lady was preaching repentance in every possible key and tune; Isabella did not listen. In these sermons Count Vierstein was not mentioned as often as he should have been, but the old lady continued to remark at frequent intervals that he would come the following Sunday without fail. Isabella was silent. The readings from the French classics were three times as long as usual; Isabella did not notice it. She only thought and thought of all the suffering she had endured in

this stupid castle from her childhood on. She determined to get away from it at any cost. Yet she did not know where to go.

Saturday night had come. Fräulein was just reading in Boileau's tenth epistle: "In vain do I stop you; my remonstrance is vain—go, depart!" when a distant, dull thunder shook the air, rattling all the windows. The old lady was startled, but kept on reading all the louder; she knew, it seemed, what the noise meant, and was trying to divert her prisoner's attention. But it was not necessary: Isabella was so deep in thought that she had no more heard the report than she had the verses of Boileau.

It soon grew dark, and every one went to bed early, as usual. Isabella slept very little; at four o'clock the bright sunshine awakened her again. It was the Sunday at last on which the Count was to appear. She looked through the open window out over the dewy landscape; her eyes sought the distant castle, the only object which she ever watched with interest, often with tears in her eyes; but, oh, horrible! the castle had only one tower left! At first the Princess thought that the sun, shining into her face, had caused an optical illusion. She ran for her spyglass; then she recognized the sad truth: the castle had now but one tower, the other, the Hasen Tower, had been blown up last night when that dull report made the windows rattle.

Isabella was beside herself with grief and anger. She had firmly believed that her father would show mercy to the castle, if only to please her, and she hoped

that such a sign of his love might lead to a reconciliation and help her to begin a new life in her father's house, one more worthy of living. Such had been her thoughts during rare and more hopeful hours. And every day she had been looking upon the still intact castle as a promise of the future; but now, to-day, the first tower had fallen, her father remained unmoved, and—the Count was coming! She dressed herself, threw a shawl over her head, and stole on tiptoe from the room, down the staircase into the castle-yard. No one noticed her at this early hour. A small gate stood open; she hurried out, not knowing what she was doing or whither she was going; at least, she had once more willed something and done something. The fresh air was inspiring, and her spirits felt uplifted on the wings of the morning wind.

Instinctively she walked in the direction of the castle, at first hurrying like a fugitive, but soon moderating her pace, for, though no one recognized her, still she was attracting the attention of the few people she happened to meet. At last she asked herself, where would she go? Her resolution was quickly formed: to Neideck. And what then? She did not know. But once up in the castle, she would be far away from her own home, and for the present that was enough.

Not accustomed, however to such long tramps, she soon grew tired, her knees shook, her eyes filled with tears; but even then she did not give up, and two hours later arrived at Neideck, where in the castle-yard she fell to the ground, completely exhausted. It

grew dark before her eyes; she heard the ringing of the church-bells, the humming of bees; she noticed the fragrance of the elder blossoms, but she did not realize where she was, and lay as in a dream.

A voice roused her. Some one asked anxiously: "What is the matter, young woman?" She looked up. A young man in traveling clothes, with boots and spurs, stood before her, looking at her kindly. She did not answer, but searched him sharply with her eyes; there was something familiar in his face, but she could not remember where she had seen it.

"What are you doing here so early in the morning?" he asked.

"I am looking for the schoolmaster," stammered Isabella. It was all she could think of.

"I am looking for him, too," remarked the young man. "This Burg Balzer is certainly a remarkable man: something of a fool, no doubt, like all original people. But he no longer lives here; he has been dismissed and sent away, as one of the peasants told me; sent away because he conducted himself very improperly toward the Princess Isabella."

"That is not true!" said Isabella. "At least, not as far as the Princess is concerned."

"Oh, yes," the stranger assured her. "There is no joking with this Isabella; she is such a bore!"

"Perhaps she is more bored than boring," replied Isabella.

The stranger looked at her attentively. "Who are you, I wonder, that you know so much about this? Perhaps a lady's maid from the castle?"

She stammered timidly: "Yes." She had learned so little, did not know how to tell even a lie.

"Well, if that is so, I wish you would tell me a little about your mistress. I heard that she was quite a nice-looking puppet, pulled by a string, either by her father or her lady-in-waiting. Is she not going to marry Count Vierstein in the near future?"

"She is not quite such a puppet as you think!" cried Isabella, very indignantly, and in quite another tone. "The string is broken; she is *not* going to marry this wild Count, not under any circumstances!"

"Oh, oh! Is the Count really so wild? And how do you know that?"

"He lives only among hunters, horses, dogs, and soldiers, and roams the woods all day long!"

"So, so! And why are you roaming through old castles all alone, my highly virtuous young woman?"

"I? Oh, I wished to see the schoolmaster and the— the tower that was blown up yesterday," Isabella answered, very much embarrassed.

"Well, I intended to see the tower too; the schoolmaster's book interested me—"

"Have you read his book? That was the reason I came here," interrupted Isabella.

"It is an absurd book," the stranger went on. "But the man's feeling for his castle is true and strong. After reading his book you feel drawn toward this place, whether you wish to come or not."

"That is just what happened to me," whispered the Princess.

"There is a sentimental maid for you," thought the

stranger. "They are becoming very frequent in our philosophical century."

"That young man has a good heart and clear head," thought Isabella. As far back as she could remember he was the first person who had ever shown her any sympathy.

"Oh, see here," he suddenly broke out aloud and straightened himself. "I can not play a part. I am Count Vierstein, whom you called 'the wild Count.' And if I do roam about in God's nature all day long, I get more joy and pleasure out of it than do your pale people who live indoors. I can see the sun rising here from this enchanted castle, as I did to-day—and—I am furious at the people over there in Westerau who, without further ado, are barbarous enough to blow up the home of their ancestors. You may tell your mistress so; I shall see her myself to-day, but shall not have much to say to her, certainly nothing about this."

For a while Isabella stood speechless with terror. But the Count did not look at all wicked; in fact, he was quite handsome; and not nearly so ill-mannered as Fräulein von Martigny had described him; on the contrary, he seemed to her kind and very tactful. This consideration lessened her terror. Should she tell him? But shame closed her lips. Finally she controlled herself and whispered: "Are you really on the way to Westerau? Several times you have been expected there, but always in vain."

"Well, it is a rough road, this journey after a bride!" the Count sighed. "However, I must go

through with it; my father wishes it, and children must obey their parents, so says the Bible. But there is a limit to our obedience; I will go to Westerau and do all that is necessary and proper, but if I then dislike this Princess as much as I do from a distance—and I have little doubt of that—and if she herself intends to give me, as you say, a very decided refusal—then I can ride back home with a light and happy heart, having done my duty. My attendants are awaiting me down in the village. It is too early to make a call, and I wish once more to breathe freely here in Burg Balzer's incomparable castle before I start on the rough road I have to travel. There, now, you know my whole history!"

Isabella drew the shawl closer over her head and looked out into the valley. She saw there a group of horsemen, followed by a carriage; the horsemen were galloping toward the castle, and in the lead, as they came nearer, she recognized her father. With an imploring cry she turned to the Count: "Save me! That is my father there, the Prince! I am Isabella. Save me, protect me from my father. Do not let them take me back into that hateful castle; it would kill me!"

The Count was covered with surprise. "You are really Isabella, my dear cousin? But you don't look at all like your pictures, and your speech is quite different from your letters. But why are you so afraid of your father. Did you run away from him?"

"Yes, because he tried to make me marry—you!"

"Well," thought the Count, "she at least has a will of her own, and wishes to refuse me in her own way."

"But not only on that account am I afraid," the Princess continued, "but because I was shut into my room as punishment for wishing to save the castle and for taking the schoolmaster to my father on my own responsibility!"

"On your own responsibility?" the Count repeated very cheerfully. "Then you *did* run away after all?" Isabella did not answer. "Why did you not run away long ago? We would have known each other so much sooner. And, and—are you often so excited as you are to-day?"

"Oh, no; that is only here in Neideck; below, in the castle, it is very different."

"You see," said the Count, "it is the bracing air that does it! You must be out of doors more, ride horseback, go hunting; then you will get rosy cheeks! By the way, the air in Vierstein is much better than it is down there in Westerau!"

But the poor girl only kept on imploring, "My father! Save me!" All at once they heard a voice whisper, "Quick, come here, this is the best hiding-place you can find! I wished to keep it a secret from every one, but to save the gracious Princess I gladly sacrifice my secret, my head, everything! Come here, the entrance is not far away."

The Count turned and saw a strange figure, that would have made him laugh if he had not been provoked. "What does the fellow mean?"

"Pardon me, sir, I am Burg Balzer, whom you came to see. Sitting under the elder-bush here, I could not help hearing the whole conversation. I

beg you to forgive me! But come, waste no more time!"

"My dear friend," answered the Count coolly, "we will look at your vault some other time; on the contrary, you had better come over here, where I can protect both of you. I am not used to hiding."

The Prince rode into the castle yard; his foaming horse reared in front of the group: Count Vierstein in the middle, at his right the Princess, at his left Burg Balzer.

At first the Prince did not recognize the Count; then answering the latter's bow, he exchanged a few words with him, surprised at meeting him here and under such circumstances. After a while the Prince turned to Isabella: "Come here, you shameless girl!" And then to the Count: "Unheard-of things have happened, cousin! And before I do my duty as host, I must do my duty as father. Down there at the foot of the hill a carriage is awaiting you, Isabella; the curtains are closely drawn. You will step into the carriage; Fräulein von Martigny is expecting you; everything is so arranged that you can drive home and reach your room without being seen. A Princess of Westerau, who ran away! Who ever heard of such a thing in the whole history of our family!"

Firmly, though very respectfully, Count Vierstein came forward. "Forgive me, most gracious prince and cousin, if I do not give up the Princess to you; at least, not against her will. She has placed herself under my protection, and as a man of honor I must grant it to her."

The Prince was astounded completely. What! Isabella had placed herself under the Count's protection, and at the same time had run away only to escape the Count.

Burg Balzer, taking advantage of his bewilderment, pressed forward, forgot his fear of horses, until almost touching that of the Prince, and begged for mercy toward his castle. For answer the Prince called to his outrider: "Drive this fool down the mountain with your whip!"

Again the Count interceded: "This man, too, is under my protection, and I beg your Highness to leave him to me for the present!"

"My dear cousin," laughed the Prince angrily, "do you claim sovereign rights over my family and my subjects? Perhaps I am no longer master here on my own soil!"

"Indeed," answered the Count, "I would be very much pleased if you would place that, too, under my protection! The castle would be a perfect gem in my dear cousin's dowry, and I am beginning to hope that she may not repulse this wild fellow when once she comes to know him better!"

"What! Courting and marriage contract here in the open road? Preposterous!" said the Prince. But all at once he seemed to be in the best of humors. Burg Balzer pulled the Count's sleeve and whispered mysteriously: "I have discovered the most beautiful place for the wedding ceremony; it is right here under our feet." Even the Prince was listening now. "While I was in hiding, and having nothing else to do, I suc-

ceeded in clearing out the rubbish from the passageway, and oh, joy! I found a beautiful crypt under the old chapel. For centuries it had been buried underneath, and it has three heavy antique columns, the capitals of which are ornamented with eagles and lions—”

“A wedding in the cellar? Preposterous!” interrupted the Prince. “You are a fool, schoolmaster! There! I have called you by mistake ‘schoolmaster’; you may be one again! A man’s word is as good as his bond!”

As this did not seem the proper place for further discussion, the Prince decided to lead his daughter to the carriage and to accompany her with his attendants to the castle. The Count was to stay here about two hours longer—perhaps visit the crypt—in order to give the people in Westerau time to prepare a reception with all honors. Everything else could then be arranged in proper form.

Four weeks later the schoolmaster, who had received by decree the additional dignity of castellan in Neideck, ordered ten men to come to the castle yard and raise from the well the old cannon that had been buried there since 1757. After three days’ labor they succeeded in dragging it out and hoisting it into its old place near the castle gate, ready to salute at the wedding of Princess Isabella and her cousin Frederick, which was to take place the following day in the chapel of Castle Westerau.

While Balzer was leaning against the cannon, in a very comfortable and contemplative frame of mind,

the inspector came up the mountain, put his hand on the schoolmaster's shoulder, and said: "Well, schoolmaster, what about your prophecy of the lady of high rank who was to save the castle? It seems to me the Princess did *not* do it after all, and the Count did. And who are the men that have been put to shame?"

Philip replied: "Count or countess, it does not matter, so long as the castle is saved! But it is a pity they did not let that tower stand one day longer; it could have lasted a thousand years to come. Prophecies never are fulfilled to the letter, or people would all be superstitious. With regard to the humiliated men—well, what about the steward and the Prince himself? Only one must not even think of that, far less say so. After all, we can see in all this again how a just power guides the fate of men as well as of castles. Neideck has always been a good, true stronghold: in its first youth it was the cradle of our ruling family; in the prime of its existence it was a place of refuge for all around; now it has grown old and has retired into private life. But even so it has given to our Princess an excellent husband, and to a poor schoolmaster the prospect of a happy old age. May it prosper for many years to come."

THE YOUNG GIRL OF TREPPI

BY PAUL JOHANN LUDWIG HEYSE



Heyse, creator in the art of poetry, fiction, and the drama, is opposed to the new materialism.

First known as one of Germany's most original writers of narrative poetry, he gradually worked his way into the short story. Brandes, most influential of living critics, once said of these "Novellen" of Heyse's: "The Novelle, as he has made it, is an entirely original and independent creation, his actual property."

Heyse was born in Berlin in 1830. After devoting himself to the study of languages, he settled in Munich, and with a collection of "Märchen" began that remarkable series of tales which he has brought, as Robert König says, to such genuine artistic perfection. Popular as they all are, the two best are thought to be "L'Arrabiata" and "The Young Girl of Treppi," in which his peculiar talent, the portrayal of strong, passionate feminine nature, is signally displayed.

Heyse's style has been called the most perfect of modern Germany.



THE YOUNG GIRL OF TREPPI

BY PAUL HEYSE

ON a height of the Apennines where the mountains rise between Tuscany and the northern part of the Papal States stands a lonely village of herdsmen called Treppi. The paths that lead up to it are none of them accessible by wagon. The road for post and vetturino, away toward the south, many an hour's travel, goes winding in and out over the mountains in a wide, roundabout course. By way of Treppi pass only the peasants who have business with the herdsmen, and occasionally a painter or pedestrian who wishes to avoid the highways, and during the night-time the contrabbandieri, or smugglers, with their pack-horses that know better than any of them the way over the rocky passes leading to the desolate village.

It was about the middle of October, a time when the evenings on these heights usually grow clearer. But now, after the heat of the day, a fine mist had rolled up out of the ravines and was spreading itself slowly over the bare, rocky outlines of the majestic highlands. It was perhaps nine o'clock at night. In the lowly, scattered huts of stone, which by day were guarded only by the very old women and the very young children, still feebly glimmered the lights of their hearth-

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fires. Around the hearths, over which the big kettle swung, the herdsmen and their families lay sleeping; the dogs stretched themselves beside the ashes; on a heap of hides some sleepless old grandmother was still sitting up, perhaps, mechanically plying her spindle back and forth while she mumbled prayers or rocked a child that slept restlessly in its cradle. Through holes in the walls, as big as your hand, the night air oozed damp and earthy, and from the hearth-fire that was quickly burning out, smothered by the fog, the smoke choked thickly back and rolled along the ceiling of the huts without seeming to trouble the old woman in the least. After a while she, too, slept as well as she could, with her eyes wide open.

In one home alone was there sign of life. Like the others, this hut was but one story high; but the stones were better laid, the door was wider and higher, and against the broad, square building that formed the dwelling proper were supported various sheds, lean-to stalls, and a well-bricked oven. Before the door of the house stood a group of packed horses, from whose noses a young lad was tugging away at the empty meal-bags, while from the house came six or seven armed men out into the mist and hastily got their horses ready. As they started, a very old dog that was lying near the door waved his tail in a leisurely fashion; then he lifted himself wearily from the ground and swung slowly into the hut, where the fire was still burning brightly. By the hearth stood his mistress, facing the fire, her straight figure motionless, her arms hanging down by her hips. As the dog touched her

hand with his soft nose, she turned, startled out of a reverie. "Fuoco," she said, "poor dog, you are sick!" The dog whined and moved his tail gratefully. Then he crept near to the hearth onto an old hide and stretched himself there, coughing and moaning.

In the mean time some of the servants had come in and seated themselves around the great table before the empty platters which the departing contrabbandieri had just left. An old maid-servant now filled them again with polenta from the great kettle, and taking her own platter sat down with the others. As they ate, not a word was spoken; the fire crackled, the dog moaned hoarsely in his sleep, the grave young girl sat down on the stone slab of the hearth, leaving untouched the small plate of polenta which the maid had placed before her, and gazed about the hall, lost in self-forgetfulness. The mist was now standing before the door like a white wall. But behind the edge of the crags the half-moon rose clear into the heavens.

Up the street came a sound like the beating of hoofs and footsteps. "Pietro!" called the young mistress of the house in a quiet, reminding tone. A tall fellow rose quickly from the table and disappeared into the fog.

The footsteps and voices were now heard coming nearer; at length the horse stopped before the hut. Still a little while and three men appeared under the doorway and entered with a curt "good evening." Pietro approached the young woman who was gazing without interest into the fire. "They are two men from Porretta," he said to her, "without any merchandise;

they are guiding a signor over the mountains, whose passport is not in order."

"Nina!" called the young woman. The old serving-maid got up and came toward the hearth.

"It isn't that they only want to eat, padrona," continued the fellow. "Maybe the signor can have a night's lodging, too. He wishes to go no farther before daybreak."

"Make up a straw bed for him in the lean-to." Pietro nodded and went back to the table.

The three had taken their places without the servants deigning to give them any particular attention. Two of them were contrabbandieri, well armed, their cloaks thrown lightly about them, their hats drawn well down over their foreheads. They nodded a friendly greeting to the others, as to old acquaintances, and after they had given place to their companion, they made the sign of the cross, and began to eat.

The gentleman who had come with them ate nothing. He removed the hat from his high brow, passed his hand through his hair, and let his eyes wander over the place and the company. On the walls he read the sacred texts drawn in charcoal, saw in the corner the picture of the Madonna with the little lamp burning before it, and close by the fowls asleep on their perches; then the ears of corn, strung in rows, hanging from the ceiling; a board with jugs and wicker bottles on it, hides and baskets arranged in rows one upon the other. At last his eyes were arrested by the young woman at the hearth. Her dark profile showed severe and beautiful against the flickering glow of the fire, a great

mass of black braids coiled low on her neck, her hands were lying locked together over one knee, while her other foot rested on the stone floor of the hall. What her age was he could not guess. But by her bearing he knew that she was mistress of the house.

"Have you any wine in the house, padrona?" he then asked. Scarcely had he spoken these words when the young girl sprang up as if struck by lightning, and stood rigidly by the hearth with both arms supporting her against the ledge. At the same instant the dog, too, started out of his sleep. A savage growl broke from his coughing breast. The stranger saw all at once four kindling eyes fastened upon him.

"May I not ask if you have wine in the house, padrona?" he now repeated. Before the last word was finished, the dog, howling loudly, sprang upon him with unaccountable fury and with his teeth tore the cloak from the man's shoulders, and would have broken loose upon him again and again had not a sharp command from his mistress restrained him.

"Back, Fuoco, back! Peace, be quiet!" The dog stood in the middle of the room, beating heavily with his tail, his eyes fixed on the stranger. "Shut him up in the stall, Pietro!" said the young woman, half-aloud. She stood at the hearth, rigid as always, and, as Pietro hesitated, repeated the order. For the nightly place of the old dog had been for years by the hearth. The servants whispered one to the other, the dog followed reluctantly, and from without the howling and whining penetrated unpleasantly into the room until it seemed to cease from sheer exhaustion. In the mean

time the maid-servant, at a sign from her mistress, had brought wine. The stranger drank, handed the beaker to his companion, and fell into silent reflection over the surprising disturbance he had so unwittingly caused. One after the other the servants put down their spoons and passed out with a "good night, padrona!" At last the three were alone with their hostess and the old serving-maid.

"The sun rises at four o'clock," said one of the contrabbandieri to the stranger. "Excellency, it is not necessary to start much earlier to be at Pistoja in good time. It's on account of the horse, that must have his six hours' rest."

"Very good, my friend. Go and sleep!"

"We will awaken you, Excellency."

"By all means," replied the stranger. "Though Madonna knows, I do not often sleep six hours at a stretch. Good night, Carlone; good night, Master Giuseppe!"

The men removed their hats respectfully and stood up. One went to the hearth and said: "Padrona, I have a message from Costanzo from Bologna, who wants to know if it was at your house he left his knife lying last Saturday."

"No," she said sharply and impatiently.

"I told him you would have sent it back to him long ago if it had been there. And then—"

"Nina," she broke in, "show them the way to the lean-to if they have forgotten it."

The maid-servant rose. "I was only going to say, Padrona," continued the man calmly, with a quiet

twinkle in his eyes, "that this gentleman here would not look twice at his money if you gave him a softer bed than ours. That is what I wanted to tell you, Padrona, and now may the Blessed Virgin send you a good night, Signora Fenice!"

With that he turned to his companion, and, like him, bowed low before the picture in the corner, crossed himself, and with the serving-maid both left the room. "Good night, Nina!" called the young girl. The old woman turned at the threshold, made a sign of inquiry, then closed the door behind her quickly and obediently. Scarcely were they alone, when Fenice took up the brass lamp that stood at the side of the hearth and quickly lighted it. The fire was gradually dying out in the hearth; the three tiny, red flames of the lamp lighted only one small corner of the room. The darkness seemed to have made the stranger drowsy, for he was sitting at the table, his head lying on his arms, his cloak wrapped close about him, as if he intended to pass the night that way. Then he heard his name called; he looked up. The lamp was burning on the table before him; opposite stood the young padrona who had called him. With irresistible power her look drew his toward her. "Filippo," said she, "don't you know me any more?" For a long time he looked searchingly into the beautiful face which was all aglow in the light of the lamp, and still more so from anxiety. The long, yielding eyelashes, as they slowly lifted and fell, softened the severity of the forehead and of the slenderly formed nose. Her mouth was a bloom of the rosiest youth; only, when it was

silent it had a touch of resignation, sorrow, and wildness, which the dark eyes did not contradict.

And now, as she stood at the table, the stern beauty of her figure showed itself, especially the superb lines of her neck and throat. Nevertheless, after a minute's thought, Filippo said:

"Truly, I do not know you, Padrona."

"It is not possible," she said, in a strange, deep tone of assurance. "You have had seven years to be thinking about me. It is a long time—surely long enough for the picture to have made an impression."

This unlooked-for reply seemed all at once to break the spell of his preoccupation. "Of course, my girl," said he, "who thinks for seven years of nothing else save the beautiful head of a young woman must come at last to know it by heart."

"Yes," said she with meaning, "it is quite true, you said so then, that you would think of nothing else."

"Seven years ago? Seven years ago I was a light-hearted, joking fellow. And you believed that in good faith?"

She nodded three times, earnestly. "Why should I not believe it? Indeed, I have even learnt it through my own experience that you said right."

"Child," said he with a relenting look that well became his determined features, "I am sorry. Seven years ago, very likely, I still thought all women knew that the tender words of men were worth little more than the counters which we occasionally exchange for ringing gold, a matter of course that has been expressly agreed upon beforehand. What did I not think

of you women seven years ago! Now, truly, I seldom think of you at all. Dear child, there are things so much more important to think about."

She was silent, as if she understood nothing of all this and was willing to wait quietly until he said something that really concerned her.

"It is surely beginning to dawn upon me," he said after a moment's thought, "that I have traveled over this part of the mountain before. Perhaps I should have recognized this village and this house if it had not been for the mist. Yes, yes, it is the place in the mountains, of course, where the doctor sent me seven years ago, and where I stormed up and down the most inaccessible places, like a fool."

"I was sure of it," she said, and a little ray of joy lighted on her lips. "I was sure you could not have forgotten. The dog, Fuoco, certainly did not forget it, neither his old hate of you—nor I—my old love." She said this so cheerfully and with such assurance that he looked at her with increasing surprise.

"I do seem to remember now a young girl," said he, "whom I met once on a height of the Apennines, and who guided me to the home of her parents. I should otherwise have been obliged to pass the night on the cliffs. I even remember that I was pleased—"

"Yes," she broke in, "very much!"

"But I didn't please the maiden. I had a long conversation with her, to which she contributed not above ten words. When I thought at last to awaken the sleeping, sullen, sad little mouth with a kiss—I see her now as she sprang away from me to one side and

picked up a stone in each hand, so that I hardly came off without being well stoned. If *you* are the maiden, how is it that you now talk to me about your old love?"

"I was fifteen years of age, Filippo, and very shy. I was always defiant and solitary, and did not know how to express myself. And then, too, I was afraid of my parents, who were still living at that time, as you afterward came to know. My father controlled many herds and herdsmen, and this inn here. There has been little change since then. Only he orders and scolds here no more—may his soul rest in Paradise! And before my mother I was shyest of all. Do you not know, you were sitting then at this very spot and praised the wine we had brought from Pistoja? I heard no more than this. My mother was looking sharply at me, so I went out and placed myself behind the window so that I could still look at you. You were younger, of course, but not better looking. You have to-day the same eyes with which you used to conquer when you wished, and the same mysterious voice which so aroused the jealousy of the dog, poor beast! Till then I had loved no one but him! He knew it, that I loved you more, he knew it better than you did."

"He was like a mad-dog that night, and justly," said Filippo. "A wonderful night! But you had seriously bewitched me, Fenice. I know that I had no rest when you were unwilling to return to the house again, that I started up and went out to look for you. I caught one glimpse of the little white kerchief you wore on your head, and then no more of you, for you the room next to the stable."

"That was my bedroom, Filippo. You did not dare to go in there."

"But I was going to. I still remember how long I stood and knocked and begged, bad fellow that I was, and thought that I should lose my head if I could not see you once more."

"Your head? No, your heart, you said. I remember all the circumstances, the words, everything!"

"Yet you wished to know nothing of them then."

"I was in a mood to die. I stood in the farthest corner and thought that if only I could still the beating of my heart, creep to the door, put my mouth to the crack through which you were speaking, I could feel your breath."

"Foolish, doting time of youth! If your mother had not come I might have been standing there still; for in the mean time you might have opened the door. I am almost ashamed, even now, to think how I went away in vexation and fury, and had a long dream about you all that night."

"I sat up in the dark and watched," said she. "Toward morning I fell asleep, and when I awoke and saw the sun—where were you? No one spoke of it to me, and I dared not ask. To see a human face was hateful to me, just as if they had killed you so that I should not see you any more. Out I rushed, running and then stopping still, up and down the mountain, all the time calling for you, cursing you, for because of you I could now love no more. At last I came down into the valley; then I got frightened and turned back again. I had been away two days when

I got home. My father beat me and my mother would not speak to me. They knew very well why I had run away. And the dog went with me, good Fuoco; but when I shouted your name out into the stillness, he growled."

There followed a pause, while the eyes of the two rested on each other. Then Filippo spoke: "How long have your parents been dead?"

"Three years. They died that same week—may their souls rest in Paradise! Then I went to Florence."

"To Florence?"

"Yes, you said you were going to Florence. The wife of the café-keeper outside the walls over there by the side of San Miniato, to her some of the smugglers directed me. For one month I lived there, and every day they sent into the city to make inquiries about you. In the evenings I went down there myself and looked for you. At last we heard that you had gone long since—no one quite knew whither."

Filippo stood up and restlessly paced the room. Fenice turned toward him, her eyes followed him, yet she showed no sign of agitation, such as now moved him. Finally he came up to her, looked at her a moment, and then said:

"And to what purpose do you confess all this to me, poveretta?"

"I have been seven years getting my courage together. Oh! if I had only confessed to you then, it would not have caused me so much sorrow, this cowardly heart. But I knew that you must come back, Filippo; only that it would last for such a long time,

that I did not know—that made me sad. I am a child to speak so. Why trouble myself about what is past? Filippo, you are there, and I am here and yours always, always!”

“Dear child,” he began softly, and then silenced what was on the tip of his tongue. But she did not perceive how quietly and thoughtfully he was standing before her, staring vacantly beyond her toward the wall. She continued speaking calmly; it was as if the words had long become familiar to her, as if she had imagined them a thousand times in her loneliness: He will come and thus and so will you speak to him.

“I had many an opportunity to marry up here, and while I was at Florence. I wanted you only. When they implored me and spoke honeyed words to me, your voice sounded out of that far-away night, your speeches that were sweeter than all other words in the world. For several years now they have been leaving me in peace, although I am not old yet, and am still as—fair as ever I was. It was as if they all knew you were coming back soon.” Then again: “Where are you going to take me now? Will you remain up here? No, for you, that will never do. Since I was in Florence I have learned that life in the mountains is dreary. We will sell the house and the herds, then I shall be rich. I am tired of the wild life of these people up here. In Florence they had to teach me all a young city woman should know, and they were astonished how quickly I learned everything. Truly I had little time to spare, and all my dreams kept telling me that it would be up here where you would seek me

again. I inquired, too, of a fortune-teller, and it has all turned out just as she said."

"And if I already have a wife?"

She looked straight at him from her full height. "You are only wishing to prove me, Filippo! You have no wife. That, too, the fortune-teller told me. But where you lived, that she did not know."

"You are right, Fenice, I have no wife. But whence does she know, or you, that I shall ever be willing to take one?"

"How could you *not* wish for me?" said she with unshaken confidence.

"Sit down here by me, Fenice! I have much to tell you. Give me your hand; promise that you will hear me patiently to the end, my poor little friend!" As she did none of all these things, he continued with a quickening pulse, standing in front of her, his eyes resting sadly upon her, while her own, as if foreboding something that would threaten her very life, now closed and now strayed to the ground.

"For years I have been compelled to keep away from Florence," he began. "As you know, there were at that time those political uprisings, that kept wavering so long, this way and that. I am a lawyer, and so know hosts of people, and write and receive a great number of letters throughout the year. Added to this, I was an independent, spoke my mind when it was necessary and was heartily hated, although I never wished to thrust any hand of mine into their secret game. Finally it became necessary for me to fly if I wished to escape an endless trial and imprisonment that would

be neither for profit nor purpose. I went to Bologna, practised law for a living, and saw few people, women least of all; for of the gay young fellow for whom you have been wearing your heart out for seven years, there is nothing left, except that my head, or my heart, if you will, is still ready to burst if I can not be conquering something—in these days to be sure something other than the bolt of a pretty girl's bedroom door. You have heard, perhaps, how at the last there was also a disturbance at Bologna. They had arrested certain highly respected men, among them one whose way of living I had known for a long time, and knew, too, that his spirit was far from these matters. After that a miserable government undertook to reform matters, much as if a sickness had broken out among your sheep and you sent a wolf into the fold. But that is neither here nor there. Enough that my friend begged me to plead his cause for him, and that I helped him to gain his freedom. No sooner had this become known, when one day a wretched fellow came running up to me on the street and covered me with insults. I could not get rid of him except by thrusting him aside with my arm against his chest, for he was intoxicated. Scarcely had I found myself out of the crowd and had stepped into a café, when there came toward me a relative of this man, also intoxicated, not with wine but with venom and anger, and upbraided me as if I had been guilty of answering words with blows, instead of doing what every man of honor would have done. I answered as calmly as I could, for I now perceived that the whole affair was a preconcerted plan of the gov-

ernment to force me shamelessly into a duel. So one word led to another until my enemy at last won his game. He pretended that he was obliged to go into Tuscany, and insisted that the affair should be settled over there. I agreed, for it was time that one of us calm members should prove to the hot-heads that the cause of our restraint was not lack of spirit, but simply the hopelessness of all private intrigue when opposed to such superior power. But when, the day before yesterday, I applied for a passport, it was refused me—unless I were willing to give my reasons; these were the orders of the supreme authority, so they said. It was now clear to me that they wanted either to draw me into disgrace by causing me to miss the duel, or to force me to steal over the border in some sort of disguise, where I could safely be caught in ambush. Then they would have pretext enough to bring legal action against me and to prolong the trial to suit their convenience.”

“The wretches! The God-forsaken!” broke in the young girl, and clenched her hands.

“So nothing remained but to trust myself to the contrabbandieri in Poretta. Early in the morning, so they tell me, we can reach Pistoja. The duel is arranged for the afternoon, in a garden just outside of the town.”

Impetuously she grasped his hand in both of hers. “Do not go down there, Filippo,” she said. “They will murder you.”

“Of course, that is what they want, child, nothing less. But how do you know it?”

"I know it here and—here!" and with her finger she touched her forehead and her heart.

"You also are a witch, a soothsayer," he continued, laughing. "Yes, I think they do wish to murder me. My adversary is the best shot in Tuscany. They have done me the honor to oppose to me a distinguished foe. Now I, too, will not altogether disgrace myself. Yet who knows how regular the proceedings will be? Who can tell? Or perhaps you have magic enough to prophesy that too? But what good would it do, child? It could not alter facts."

"Now you must drive it out of your mind," he continued after a short silence, "this following the bent of your foolish old love. Perhaps everything has had to turn out so, that I might not leave the world until I had set you free, free from yourself and your unhappy loyalty, poor child. Think, we may have been poorly suited to one another. Your loyalty was given to another Filippo, a young coxcomb with giddy lips, and carefree except for love. What would you have done with a melancholy brooder, a hermit?" During the last half of the sentence he spoke to himself, pacing up and down, but now he went up to her, and as he was about to seize her by the hand he stopped, shocked by the expression of her face. All the gentleness had gone from her manner, all the color from her lips.

"You do not love me!" she said, slowly and dully, as if another spirit were speaking out of her, as if she were listening to her own words in order to learn what was really meant. Then she drew back her hand with a cry, so that the tiny flames in the lamp threatened

to go out. And from without the ear was suddenly chilled by an angry whine and howl from the dog.

"You do not love me, no, no!" she cried, as if beside herself. "Can you give yourself over to death rather than into my arms? Can you speak calmly of your death as if it were not mine, too? It were better for me if these eyes were blind rather than see you again, and these ears had become dumb before they were forced to hear the cruel voice by which I live and die. Why did the dog not tear you to pieces before I knew that you had come? Why did your foot not slip on the edge of the precipice? Alas! Alas! Behold my sorrow, O Madonna!"

She flung herself before the picture, lay with her forehead to the ground, her hands spread far from her, and seemed to pray.

Between the murmurs and groans of the unhappy girl the man heard the alarm of the dog, while the moon now gained its full power and illuminated the whole room. And now before he could collect himself or speak a word he felt her arms about his neck again, her mouth on his throat and hot tears falling over his face.

"Do not go to your death, Filippo!" sobbed the poor girl. "If you stay here with me, who will ever find you? Let them talk as they will, the crowd of murderers, the cowardly wretches, more detestable than the wolves of the Apennines! Yes," she said, and looked up at him through her streaming tears, "you will stay. The Madonna has sent you to me—that I might save you. Filippo, I do not know what angry

words I spoke, but that they were angry I felt by the icy contraction here at my heart from which the words relieved me. Forgive me for that. It puts me in hell to think that love can be forgotten and loyalty trodden under foot. Let us sit down here and consider the matter. Do you wish a new house? We will build one. A change of company? We will send every one away, even Nina, even the old dog shall go. And if you think then they may betray you—why we will go ourselves, even to-day, now. I know all the paths, and before the sun rises we will be deep among the ravines on our way toward the north, and wandering, wandering to Genoa, to Venice, wherever you will."

"Stop!" said he sternly. "It is enough folly. You can not be my wife, Fenice. Even if they do not kill me to-morrow, it will not be for long, for I know how I am in their toils." Quietly but firmly he released his neck from her arms.

"See! my child," he continued, "things are unhappy enough as they stand, and we ought not to make them worse through want of reason. Perhaps when you hear of my death later, your eyes will be resting on a husband and beautiful children, and you will be thankful the dead man of this night had more wisdom than you, even as in that other night you had more wisdom than he. Let me go to rest now. Go you, too, and take care we do not see each other again in the morning. You have a good reputation, as I learnt from my contrabbandieri on the way here. Should we see each other in the morning, and should you make a scene—you understand, my child? And now, good

night, good night, Fenice!" Then once more he begged her earnestly for her hand. But she did not give it to him. She looked absolutely white in the moonlight; her brows and lowered eyelashes all the darker.

"Have I not sufficiently atoned for having enjoyed seven years ago one long night of too much happiness? And now he wills that this thousand-times accursed happiness shall make me unhappy again, and this time for the length of an eternity? No, no, no! I will never let him go! I would dishonor myself before all men if he should go away and die."

"Did you not hear," he broke in sharply, "that it is my will to rest? Why do you talk with such infatuation, making yourself ill? If you can not feel that honor must tear me from you, then you can never be fit for me. I am no doll on your lap to be fondled and joked with. My paths I have marked out before me, and they are too narrow for two. Show me the hide on which I am to pass the night and then—let us forget each other!"

"Though you drive me from you with blows, I will not leave you! If death places himself between us, with these good arms I will save you from him. In death and life—you are mine, Filippo!"

"Be still!" he cried aloud. The color rose suddenly to his forehead, as with both arms he pushed the impetuous figure from him. "Be still! And now it is over—now and forever. Am I a *thing* that can be dragged to any one that calls for it—to any one whose eyes take a fancy to it? You have been sighing for

me for seven years—does that give you the right to make me untrue to myself in the eighth? If you wished to corrupt me, your method was badly chosen. Seven years ago I loved you because you were different from what you are to-day. If you had flown to my neck then, and had hoped to win my heart by boldness, I would have set boldness against boldness, as I do to-day! Now, all is over between us, and I know that the pity that moved me before was not love. For the last time, where is my room?"

Sharply and coldly he said this, and in the silence that followed he felt pain at the tone of his own voice. Yet he added not a word, wondering in the stillness that she took it so much more calmly than he had feared. Far rather would he now have soothed some stormy outburst of her sorrow with kinder words. But she went past him coldly, threw open a heavy wooden door not far from the hearth, in silence pointed to the iron bolt, and then returned to the hearth again.

He entered and bolted the door behind him. Yet for a moment he stood standing by the door, to listen to what she might be doing. But there was not a sound of life in the room and not a stir could be heard in the whole house save the restlessness of the dog, the pawing of the horses in their stalls, and the whistling of the wind without which was fast driving away the last streaks of the mist. The moon in all its glory was now shining in the heavens, and it flooded the room as Filippo drew a great bunch of heather out of a hole in the wall which served as a window. He now plainly saw he was in Fenice's room. There against

the wall stood her neat, narrow bed, near it a chest unlocked, a small table, a little wooden bench, the walls hung with pictures of saints and madonnas, a little bowl of holy water under the crucifix by the door.

He now threw himself on the hard bed and felt the storm raging within him. A few minutes, and he raised one foot about to hasten out and tell her that he had hurt her only that he might heal her; then he stamped on the ground, vexed at such effeminate weakness. "It is the one thing that remains," he said to himself, "if crimes and misfortunes are to increase no more. Seven years, poor child!" A heavy comb, decorated with little pieces of metal, lay on a small table; he took it up mechanically in his hand. This brought to mind again the abundance of her hair, the proud neck on which it rested, the noble forehead round which it curled, and the browned cheeks. Then he threw the tempter into the trunk, where he saw the neat dresses, kerchiefs for the head, and bits of finery of all sorts, folded together carefully and in order. Slowly he let the lid fall again, and then went to the hole in the wall and looked out.

The room lay in the rear of the house, so that none of the other huts of Treppi obstructed his view over the chasm-cleft highlands. Opposite, stretching behind the ravine, was the naked ridge of rocks, bathed in the moon that must now be standing directly over the house. At one side he saw a few sheds, past which a path ran down into the abyss. A forlorn little pine tree, with bare twigs, was trying to take root among the stones; besides this only heather covered the

ground, with here and there some pitiable little bush. "Surely," said he in the stillness, "this is not a place in which to forget what one has loved. I would it were otherwise! Yes, yes, she who has loved me more than finery and flirting and the whispering of coxcombs would be the right wife for me, after all. What eyes would my old Marco make if he saw me suddenly return from my journey with a beautiful wife. Not once would we need to change our abode; and how unhomelike are the innumerable corners of solitude! And it would be good for me, at times—an old grumbler, a laughing child—but folly, folly, Filippo! What would the poor thing do as a widow in Bologna! No, no, none of that! No new sins added to the old mass! I will rise an hour before the others, and steal out and away before a soul in Treppi awakes."

He was about to turn from the window to stretch his form on the bed, worn out from the long ride, when he saw a womanly figure move out from the shadow of the house into the moonlight. She did not look round, but in his mind there was no doubt that it was Fenice. With quiet steps and long, she turned from the house in the direction of the path that led down into the ravine. A shudder crept over him, for at the same moment the suspicion entered his mind that she intended to harm herself. Without a moment's thought he sprang to the door and tore violently at the bolt. But the old rusty iron had imbedded itself so stubbornly in the clamps that in vain he used every effort. A cold sweat stood on his brow; he shouted, shook, and pounded against the door with fists and feet, but

could not force it. At length he gave over and rushed back to the window hole. The stone was already yielding to his fury when suddenly he saw again the figure of the young girl rise on the path and wind its way toward the hut. She was carrying something in her hand, which by the uncertain light he could not make out, only her face he saw distinctly; it was earnest and thoughtful, but without passion. Not a look did she cast toward his window, and again she disappeared into shadow, while he stood there, breathing heavily from anxiety and exertion. He heard a distinct noise, which seemed to come from the direction of the old dog, but it was neither bark nor whine. The mystery oppressed him uncomfortably. He leaned his head far out of the opening, but nothing was he conscious of save the still night in the mountains. All at once sounded a short, sharp cry, followed by the heart-rending moan of the dog, and then long and anxiously he listened; not another sound the whole night long, save once when the door of the neighboring chamber slammed and Fenice's step could be heard on the stone floor. In vain he stood for long at the bolted door, listening, questioning, imploring the girl for one short word. All was quiet next to him. He now threw himself on the bed, as in a fever, and lay there watching and thinking, until at last a few hours before midnight the moon sank and weariness became lord of his thousand fluctuating thoughts. As sleep left him, a twilight surrounded Filippo; yet when his mind was fully awake and he had raised himself in bed, he became aware that it was not like the twilight that comes be-

fore sunrise. From one side there stole toward him a feeble ray of sunlight, and he soon noticed that the hole in the wall which he had left open before he went to sleep had now become stuffed with brushwood. He pulled it out and the full morning sun blinded him. In highest wrath at the contrabbandieri, his sleep, and most of all at the young girl to whom he attributed this piece of trickery, he went instantly to the door, whose bolt now easily gave way to a moderate push, and entered the neighboring room.

He met Fenice alone, left sitting at the hearth as if she had been long expecting him. From her face had vanished every trace of yesterday's storm, not one motion of the sorrow, not so much as a line of her violent self-control met his dark eyes.

"You have managed well that I should sleep away the hours," he said sharply.

"Yes," she said, indifferently. "You were tired out. You will arrive in Pistoja early enough, if you do not have to meet the murderers until the afternoon."

"I did not ask you to concern yourself about my weariness. Are you still going to force yourself upon me? It will do you no good, girl. Where are my men?"

"Gone."

"Gone? Do you intend to make a fool of me? Where are they? Silly woman, as if they would go without being paid!" And he strode hastily toward the door, about to go out.

But Fenice remained sitting motionless, and kept speaking in the same even tone: "I have paid them.

I told them that you needed sleep and that I would accompany you down there myself; it happens that the supply of wine has given out and I must buy new, an hour this side of Pistoja."

For a moment anger prevented him from speaking. "No!" he broke out at last, "not with you, never with you! Treacherous serpent! It is laughable that you still think to ensnare me in your slippery coils. We are now as completely separated as ever. I despise you that you hold me weak and pitiable enough to be won over by these little artifices. I will not go with you! Let me have one of your servants and then—pay yourself for the price of the contrabbandieri."

He threw a purse to her, and opened the door to search for some one who might conduct him down the mountain. "Put yourself to no trouble," said she, "you will find none of the servants; they are all away in the mountains. And, besides, there is no one in Treppi who could serve you. Poor, feeble, old women, old men and children, they are still in their huts. If you do not believe me—look!"

"And apart from all else," she continued, as he stood at the threshold irresolute, in fury and vexation, and turned his back on her. "Why, think you, is the way so impossible and dangerous if I guide you? I had a dream last night by which I see that you are not intended for me. It is true, I shall still always like you a little, and it will give me pleasure still to chat with you for a few hours. Must I, for that reason, be laying snares for you? You are free to go from me wherever you will, to death or to life. Only, I

would go along with you a little way. I will swear to you, if that will appease you, that it will be for only a short way—by my life, not so far as Pistoja. Only so far until you have struck the right path. For if you go off on your own account you will soon lose your way, so that you can go neither forward nor back. You ought to know that, indeed, from your former tramps over the mountain.”

“Pest!” he murmured, and bit his lip. But he saw that the sun was rising, and after all, perhaps, what serious grounds had he for anxiety? He turned about and looked at her, and believed that he could trust the evidence of the clear-tempered look in her great eyes, that no kind of treachery lurked behind her words. She seemed to him to have become altogether another person since yesterday, and he had to confess that there was a feeling of uneasiness, mingled with his surprise, that yesterday’s attack of violent passion had passed over so soon and without leaving a trace. He looked at her a while longer, but she gave cause for no suspicion whatever.

“If you have grown reasonable, then,” he said, “let it be so. Come!”

Without any special sign of pleasure, she rose and said: “We must eat first; we will not find anything on the way.” She set a plate before him and a jug, and then she herself began to eat, standing by the hearth, but of wine she drank not a drop. He, on the contrary, to make a quick end of the matter, ate a few spoonfuls, gulped down the wine, and lighted his cigar at the coals on the hearth. During all this time not a

his acquaintance whom he described; but few of them could she call to mind, although she was aware that the smugglers had allowed many a stranger to pass the night at her house. Of one of these she had only too vivid a recollection. At the description of him the blood mounted to her face and she stood still.

"He is a bad one!" she said sullenly. "That night I woke the servants and had him locked out of the house."

During this talk the lawyer did not notice how high the sun was rising and that not a glimpse of the Tuscan plain had yet appeared. He was thinking, too, in a disconnected way, of the approaching end of the day. It was so refreshing to be tramping along this path, overgrown with bushes, fifty feet above the torrent, to feel the fine spray of the waterfall dash up against his face, to see the lizards slipping over the stones, and the graceful butterflies chasing the furtive sunlight, that he was not once conscious of how they were wandering up-stream and not yet turning westward at all. There was a magic in the voice of his guide that made him forget everything that had yesterday, in the company of the smugglers, been so incessantly in his mind. But now, as they ascended out of the ravine, and the boundless, utterly strange mountain wastes, with new heights and cliffs, desolate and parched, lay before them, he awoke all at once from his day-dream, stood still and looked into the sky. He now understood clearly that they had been wandering in the opposite direction, and quite two hours farther away from his goal than when they set out.

"Halt!" said Filippo. "I see in time that you have betrayed me after all. Is that the way to Pistoja, you traitress?"

"No," said she, fearlessly, but her eyes fell to the ground.

"Now, then, by all the power of hell, the devil can easily take lessons and learn hypocrisy of you. A curse on my blindness!"

"Man is all-powerful, man is mightier than the devil and the angels, if he loves," she said in a deep, melancholy tone.

"No," he cried, in a flash of sudden fury, "you have not triumphed yet. Do not exult yet, overconfident girl, not yet! What a crazy girl calls love can not break the will of a man. Turn back with me to the place and show me the shortest way—or I will choke you with these hands—you fool, who can not see I must hate you; you who are willing to make me appear before all the world as a good-for-nothing." He stepped up close in front of her, with clenched hands; he completely forgot himself.

"Ah! Do choke me!" She spoke with a loud but trembling voice. "Only do it, Filippo! But when you have done it, you will throw yourself over my body and weep blood from your eyes, that you can not bring me to life again. Your place will be here by me, you will struggle with the vultures that try to tear my flesh to pieces; the sun will scorch you by day, the dew of night will wet you, until you rot away as I do—but to leave me you are utterly incapable. Do you think a poor foolish thing that has been brought up

among the mountains will throw away seven years as easily as she does a day? I know what those years have cost me, how dear they were, and that I am paying a good round price when I wish to buy you with them. Should I let you go to your death? The idea is one to be laughed at. Once turn away from me and you will soon be aware that I am drawing you back to me forever. For in the wine that you drank to-day there was mixed a love-charm which no man under the sun has ever yet withstood."

Royal she looked as she cried out these words, her arms stretched toward him as if her hand were holding out a sceptre to one that owed her allegiance. But he laughed at it and said: "Your love-charm has rendered you poor service, for I never hated you more than I do at this moment. But I am a fool to hate a fool. May you be cured as well of your love as of your superstition, when you see me no more. I do not need your guidance. I see over on yonder slope a shepherd's hut with the herd about it. There's a fire gleaming. There they will undoubtedly put me in the right way. Farewell, poor serpent, farewell!"

She answered nothing as he went away, and sat down quietly in the ravine, in the shadow of a rock, in the gloomy green of the fir trees that grew down by the stream, her great eyes lowered to the ground. He had not gone long from her before he found himself without a path, between cliffs and bushes; then, much as he might like to deny it, the words of this strange girl kept exercising on his heart a disturbing

influence that turned his thoughts all inward. Meanwhile he kept ever in view the heath-fire in the meadow opposite, working his way through to reach the valley. By the position of the sun he reckoned that it must now be about the tenth hour. But when he had climbed down the mountain steep he found a sunless path beneath, and soon after a narrow bridge that crossed a new mountain stream and led up along the opposite side, and promised to open out into the meadow. He followed this, and at first the path ran steep up, but afterward, by a great circuit, far away to the foot of the mountain. He saw now that this would not bring him straight to his goal; yet over the more direct way hung inaccessible, precipitous crags, and unless he preferred to return, he must trust himself to this path. Now he walked on briskly, at first like one released from the fetters over yonder, and peering out intently every once in a while for the hut that kept continually receding. By and by, as his blood began to pulse more evenly, there came into his mind again all the details of the scene through which he had just passed. The picture of the beautiful girl he now saw before him vividly, and not as before, through the mist of sudden anger. He could not resist a feeling of profound pity. "She is over there now," he said to himself. "The poor, deluded child sits building castles with her magic art. It was for that she left the hut yesterday at night, and by the light of the moon to gather who knows what harmless herbs. I remember; did not even my own brave smugglers, too, point out to me some special white blossoms among the rocks, and say

they were powerful in exciting love for love? Innocent flowers, how they have slandered you! And it was for that she shattered the jug, for that the wine tasted so bitter on my tongue. The older innocence grows, the stronger and more worthy of honor it becomes. How like the Cumæan Sibyl she stood before me, so truth-compelling, almost like that Roman as she flung her books into the fire. How beautiful and afflicted your delusions have made you!"

The farther he went, the stronger did he feel the pathetic splendor of her love and the power of her beauty which separation was now beginning to make clear to him.

"I ought not to have made her suffer because she wished in perfect good faith to save me, to set me free from my inevitable duties. I should have taken the hand she offered me and said: 'I love you, Fenice, and if I am still alive, I will come back to you and take you home.' How blind I was not to have thought of this way out! Shame upon the lawyer! I ought to have taken leave of her with kisses, like a bridegroom, then she would have had no suspicion that I was deceiving her, instead of which I have insisted with the stubborn girl and only made matters worse."

Now he became absorbed in the dream of such a leave-taking and fancied he felt her breath and the touch of her fresh young lips upon his own. It was as if he almost heard his name called. "Fenice!" he cried back passionately, and stood still with violently beating heart. The stream rushed beneath him, the

branches of the firs hung motionless, far and wide a shady wilderness.

Her name was again upon his lips, when just in time the shame of what the world thinks sealed his mouth—shame and a fear as well. He struck himself upon the brow. "Am I still so far gone that I even dream of her while I am awake?" he cried. "Is she to prove right that no man under the sun is able to withstand this magic? Then, indeed, I should be worthy of nothing better than what she thought to make of me; to be called a Squire of Dames all my life long! No, to hell with you, beautiful, deceiving she-devil!"

He had regained for the moment his self-control, but now he saw that he had also been led astray from his path. He could not go back unless he was willing to run into the arms of danger. So now he concluded to reach again, at any price, some height from which he could look about him for the lost shepherd's hut. The bank of the stream along which he was walking, rushing far below, was much too steep. So he flung his cloak over his shoulder, chose a secure footing, and at one leap was on the other side of the ravine, whose walls came close together here. In better spirits, he now mounted the opposite slope and soon came out into the broad sunshine. The sun beat on his head cruelly and his tongue was parched with thirst, as with a great effort he worked his way up. Now all at once anxiety came upon him that in spite of all his pains he might never reach the goal. Thicker and thicker the blood mounted to his head; he blamed the

devil's wine that he had tossed down in the morning, and again he had to think of the white blossoms they had pointed out to him yesterday on the way. Here they were growing again—his flesh crept. "If it should be true," he thought; "if there are powers that can master our hearts and minds and bend the will of a man to the caprice of a maid—rather let the worst come than this disgrace! Rather death than slavery. But no, no, no, a lie can conquer only him who believes in it. Be a man, Filippo; forward, the height is there before you; only a short time, and this cursed mountain with its ghosts will lie behind you forever!"

And yet he could not cool the fever in his blood. Every stone, every slippery place, every pine-bough hanging heavily before him was a reminder which he had to conquer by force, with an exertion of will out of all proportion. When at last he arrived at the height, holding on by the last bushes and with a swing gained the top, the blood was dripping from his eyes so, and the sudden glare of the sun so dazed him, that he could not look about. Angrily he chafed his forehead, and lifting his hat brushed his hand through the tangled hair. Then again he heard his name called, this time in very truth, and started terrified toward the spot from which they were calling him. And opposite, a few steps from the rock, as he had left her, sat Fenice, looking at him with calm, happy eyes.

"Have you come at last, Filippo!" she said heartily. "I expected you sooner."

"Fantom of Hell!" he cried, beside himself with

fear, as all the passion of longing struggled within him, "do you still mock me because I am led astray by pain and the sun is melting everything in my brain? Do you triumph because I am forced to see you once more, in order that I may amuse you once more? If I have found you again, by God Almighty, it is not because I have looked for you, and you shall lose me in spite of it!"

She shook her head, laughing strangely. "It draws you without your knowing it," she said. "You would find me if all the mountains in the world were between us, for in your wine I mixed seven drops of the dog's heart's blood. Poor Fuoco! He loved me and he hated you. So the Filippo that you once were you shall hate as you hated me and shall have no peace again until you love me. Filippo, do you not see now that I have conquered you? Come now, I will show you the way again to Genoa, my beloved, my husband, my hero!"

With that she stood up, and was about to encircle him with her two arms, when suddenly she shrank back from his face. He had become deathly pale, except for the red in the whites of his eyes, his lips moved without giving a sound, his hat had fallen from his head, with his hands he hastily waved off every approach.

"A dog! a dog!" were his first painfully spoken words. "No! no! no! You shall not conquer, demon! Better a dead man than a living dog!" At that rang out a frightful laugh from his lips, and heavily, as if he were struggling by force for every step, his eyes

fixed staringly at the girl, he turned, staggering, and fell headlong backward down into the ravine which he had just left.

Before her eyes it was night; with both hands she tore at her heart and sent out a cry that rang through the ravine like the cry of a falcon, as she saw the tall figure disappear over the edge of the precipice. She tottered a few steps, then stood firm and upright, her hands always crushed against her heart. "Madonna!" she cried, without giving a thought to anything. Always looking down ahead of her, impetuously she now approached the ravine and began to climb down the stone wall between the firs. Her lips, breathing heavily, murmured words without meaning; with one hand she gripped fast her heart, with the other she let herself down by the stones and branches. Thus, until she came to the base of the fir trees—there he was lying. He had his eyes closed, his forehead and hair covered with blood, his back leaning against the trunk of a tree. His coat was torn and his right leg, moreover, seemed to be wounded. Whether he lived she could not make out. She took him up in both arms, then she felt that he still moved. His cloak, which he had worn closely about his shoulders, seemed to have broken the force of his fall. "Christ be praised!" she said, breathing once more. It was as if the strength of a giant had come to her, as she climbed up the steep again with the helpless man against her breast. It was long work. Four times she laid him down among the moss and rocks, still the life slept in him. When at last she arrived at the top with her

unfortunate burden, her own knees gave way, and she lay for a moment in a faint and in complete unconsciousness. Then she stood up and turned away in the direction in which lay the shepherd's hut. When she had come near enough she set up a shrill call throughout the width of the valley. The echo answered first, then a human voice. She called a second time, and then turned back without waiting for the answer. When she again came to the helpless man, she moaned sorrowfully and dragged him into the shadow of the rock where she had been sitting before and waiting for him. There he found himself when consciousness feebly returned and he first opened his eyes again. He saw two shepherds by him, one an old man, the other a young lad of seventeen years. They were sprinkling water in his face and rubbing his temples. His head was resting softly; he did not know that he was lying in the lap of the young girl.

He seemed altogether to have forgotten her. He heaved a deep sigh that shook him from head to foot, and then closed his eyes again. At last he begged with faltering voice: "One of you good people, will you go down—quickly—to Pistoja. They are waiting for me. May God's mercy reward him who tells the landlord of the Fortuna—how it is with me. I mean—" his voice and consciousness failed again.

"I will go," said the girl. "You two, in the meanwhile, carry the master to Treppi, and lay him on the bed which Nina will show you. She must call the surgeon, the old woman, and have the master healed and bandaged by her. Lift him up, you, Tommaso,

by the shoulders; you, Beppo, by the feet. So, lift him! Softly! Softly! But stop—dip this in water and lay it on his brow and wet it again at every spring. Do you understand?"

She tore from her head a great piece of the linen kerchief, soaked it and bound it about the bloody head of Filippo. Then he was lifted up, the men bore him on to Treppi, and the girl, gazing after him with the life entirely gone from her eyes, picked up her skirts quickly and went along the rough path down the mountain.

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It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when she reached Pistoja. The Fortuna inn lay some hundred feet beyond the city, and at this, the hour of siesta, there was but little sign of life within. In the shadow of the broad overhanging eaves wagons were standing, unhitched, while the drivers were asleep on the cushions; in the great smithy opposite, all work was at rest, and through the thickly dusted trees along the highway not a breeze was stirring. Fenice went over to the spring in front of the house, whose stream, the only busy thing about, was pouring down into the great stone trough, and refreshed her hands and face. Then she drank, slow and deep, to still both thirst and hunger, and went into the tavern.

The landlord lifted himself sleepily from the bench in the wine-room, but lay down again when he saw that it was a girl from Treppi that disturbed his rest.

"What do you want?" he addressed her sharply.

"If you want something to eat or some wine, go into the kitchen."

"Are you the landlord?" she asked quietly.

"Who else but me? You know me, I should think—Baldassare Tizzi of the Fortuna. What have you got for me, my pretty daughter?"

"A message from Signor Filippo Mannini, the lawyer."

"Eh, eh, that's it, is it? That's something different, to be sure," and he got up quickly. "Didn't he come himself, child? There are some gentlemen over there waiting for him."

"Then bring me to them."

"Ei, ei, the sphinx! Can't a man know what he has to say to the gentlemen?"

"No."

"There, there, very good, child, very good. Every one has his own secret, this pretty stubborn-head as well as the tough skull of old Baldassare. Eh, eh, so he is not coming; that will be very displeasing to the gentlemen; they appear to have important business with him." He became silent and looked at the girl sidewise. But as she gave no sign of taking him into her confidence, but opened the door, he put on his straw hat and went out with her, shaking his head.

A little wine-garden lay at the back of the court through which she passed as the old man continued breaking out into questions and exclamations to which she returned not a word. At the end of the middle arbor-walk lay an unpretentious summer house; the shutters were closed, and on the inside over the glass

door hung down a heavy curtain. A few steps from the pavilion, the landlord told Fenice to wait—and he went alone to the door, which opened at his knock. Fenice then saw the curtain thrust aside and a pair of eyes look out at her. Then the old man came back to her and said that the gentlemen would speak with her.

As Fenice entered the pavilion a man who had been sitting at the table with his back to the door rose and shot a quick, piercing glance at her. Two others remained seated on their chairs. On the table she saw flasks of wine and glasses.

"The signor, the lawyer, is not coming, as he promised?" said the men before whom she stood.

"Who are you, and what have you brought as evidence of your mission?"

"I am a girl from Treppi, Fenice Cattaneo, sir. Evidence? I have none, other than that I am telling the truth."

"Why does the signor, the lawyer, not come? We thought he was a man of honor."

"He is none the less honorable because he has suffered a violent fall from the cliffs and has been wounded in the head and in the leg, so that he has lost consciousness."

The questioner exchanged glances with the other men, and then continued:

"You tell the truth, to be sure, Fenice Cattaneo, because you know how to lie so badly. If he has lost consciousness, how could he send you here to announce it to us?"

"Speech came back to him for a moment. Then he

said that he was expected at the Fortuna; that it should be made known there what had happened to him."

A dry laugh was audible from one of the other men.

"You *sée*," said the speaker, "these gentlemen here put no great faith in your tale. Truly, it is easier to play the poet than the man of honor."

"If you mean, signor, that out of cowardice Signor Filippo does not come, it is an abominable lie, which may Heaven put down to your account," she said firmly, and looked at each of the men in turn.

"You are warm, little one," mocked the man. "Are you, perhaps, the very good friend of the gentleman, the lawyer, heh?"

"No, the Madonna is witness!" said she, in her richest voice. The men whispered together, and she heard one of them say: "The Aerie,¹ too, is in Tuscany. You do not really believe in this trick, do you?" The third interrupted him: "He lies no more in Treppi than—"

"Come and see for yourself," Fenice broke into their whispering. "But you shall not carry weapons, if I am to guide you."

"Little fool," said the first speaker. "Think you that we will risk our lives for such a trim little creature as you are?"

"No, but for him; that I know."

"Have you any other special conditions to impose, Fenice Cattaneo?"

¹ Meaning Treppi among the rock-hills.

"Yes, that a surgeon accompanies us. Is there one among you, Signori?"

She received no answer. Instead of which the three men put their heads together. "As we came by, I saw him by chance in front of his house; it is to be hoped that he has not yet returned to the city," said one of them, and then left the pavilion. He returned after a short time with a fourth, whom the company did not seem to know.

"Will you do us the kindness of going up with us to Treppi?" The spokesman addressed him. "You will be informed on the way what is the business in hand."

The other bowed silently, and they all left the pavilion. As they passed the kitchen, Fenice provided herself with some bread and took a few bites of it. Then she went on ahead of the company again and struck into the path leading to the mountain. She paid no attention to her companions, who were talking excitedly among themselves, but hurried on as fast as she could, so that they had to call her several times for fear they should lose her from their sight. Then she stopped and waited, and in hopeless brooding gazed out into empty space, her hand pressed close to her heart. So the evening wore on before they arrived at the height.

The village of Treppi looked no livelier than usual. Only the faces of a few children stirred in curiosity at the windows, and a few old women appeared under their doorways as Fenice passed by with her companions. She spoke with no one, but went straight to her

home, returning the neighbors' greetings with a curt wave of the hand. Here before the door stood a group of men deep in conversation, servants were busy with packed horses, and contrabbandieri were going to and fro. When they saw the strangers coming, there was a panic among the people. They drew aside and let the company pass. Fenice exchanged a few words with Nina in the great hall and then opened the door of her room. In there, in the dimness, could be seen the wounded man, stretched out on the bed, and kneeling on the ground beside him a very old woman of Treppi.

"How is he getting on, chiaruccia?" (chirurgion) asked Fenice.

"Not badly, praise the Madonna!" answered the old woman, and with sharp glances inspected the gentlemen who were entering behind the young girl.

Filippo started up from a half sleep and his pale face suddenly glowed: "It is you!" said he.

"Yes, I am bringing the gentlemen with whom you intended to fight, that they may see for themselves that you could not come. There's a surgeon here, also."

The feeble glance of the man lying there stole slowly over the four strange faces. "He is not among them," he said. "I do not know any of these gentlemen."

As he spoke, and was about to close his eyes again, the spokesman stepped out from among the three and said: "It is enough that we know *you*, Signor Filippo Mannini. We have orders to wait and to arrest you. Letters of yours have been seized, from which it ap-

pears that you have set foot in Tuscany again not only in order to settle the duel, but also to establish a certain society for the purpose of lending aid to your party at Bologna. You see before you the Commissary of Police and here are my orders."

He drew a paper from his pocket and held it before Filippo's face. But the latter only stared at it, as if he understood nothing of the matter, and fell back again into his sleep-like stupor.

"Examine the wound, Doctor"—the Commissary now turned to the surgeon. "If his condition will allow it at all, we must carry the gentleman down without delay. I saw some horses outside there. We can accomplish two acts of the law at once if we take possession of them, for they are laden with smuggled goods. It is a lucky thing one knows what sort of people visit Treppi when one wants to know it."

As he said this, and the surgeon approached Filippo, Fenice disappeared from the room. The old surgeon remained quietly sitting and mumbling to herself. Voices were heard without and an unusual disturbance of going to and fro, and at the hole in the wall faces looked in and quickly disappeared again.

"It is possible," the surgeon now said, "for us to take him down if we bind him tight with a twofold bandage. Frankly, he would recover more rapidly if he were left here in this peaceful spot and in the care of this old witch, whose medicinal herbs put the most learned physician to shame. The fever may endanger his life on the way, and I will in no case take the responsibility, Mr. Commissary."

"Unnecessary, unnecessary," replied the other. "*How* to get rid of him does not enter into the question. So bind your rags about him, as tight as you can, so that none of them may slip, and then forward. We have the moonlight and are taking a young fellow along with us as guide. Meanwhile, go out, Molza, and secure the horses."

The police officer whom the order concerned opened the door of the room quickly and was about to go out when an unexpected sight turned him to stone. The room adjoining was occupied by a crowd of village folk, at whose head stood two contrabbandieri. Fenice was still addressing them as the door opened. Now she stepped to the threshold of the room, and said, with sharp emphasis:

"You will leave this room instantly, gentlemen, and without the wounded man, or you will never see Pistoja again. No blood has ever yet flowed in this house as long as Fenice Cattaneo has been mistress of it, and may the Madonna prevent any such crime for all time to come. Do not try to return, either, with more men. You still bear in mind, perhaps, the spot where one has to climb up, one by one, the rock staircase. A single child can defend this pass, if he rolls down the steep the stones that lie scattered up on top as if sown there. We will place a watch there until this gentleman is in safety. Now, go and boast abroad of your heroism, how you have played a young girl false and wished to murder a wounded man."

The faces of the officers turned paler and paler, and after the last words there followed a pause. Then, as

if at a word of command, they all three drew from their pockets the pistols that had up to now been concealed, and deliberately the Commissary said: "We come in the name of the law. If you do not respect it yourself, will you still hinder others from executing it? It may cost six of you your lives if you compel us to procure the law by force."

A murmur passed through the crowd of the others. "Be still, friends," cried the resolute girl. "They dare not do it. They know that every man they shoot will bring a sixfold death upon the murderer. You speak like a fool," she said, turning again to the Commissary. "The fear that sits on your brows speaks, at least, more reasonably. Do as fear advises you. The way is open, gentlemen!"

She stepped back and pointed with her left hand toward the front door of the house. Those in the room whispered a few words together, then with conciliatory bearing they walked through the excited crowd, which with ever-increasing curses made way for them. The surgeon was undecided which he should follow; but at an imperious nod from the young girl, he hastily joined his companions.

This whole scene had been witnessed by the big eyes of the sick man in the chamber, who had half risen. Now the old woman went back to him and smoothed his pillow for him.

"Lie still, my son!" said she, "there is no danger. Sleep, sleep, poor son, the old chiaruccia watches, and that you may be still more secure, that is our Fenice's care, the blessed child! Sleep, sleep!" She crooned

him to sleep with monotonous songs, like a child. But he took the name of Fenice with him into his dreams.

Filippo was ten days up there in the mountains and in the care of the old woman, slept much by night, and by day, sitting before the door, enjoyed the clear air and the peacefulness of it all. As soon as he was able to write again, he sent a messenger with a letter to Bologna, and the next day received an answer. Whether welcome or unwelcome was not to be read in his pale face. Except to his nurse and the children of Treppi he spoke to no one, and he saw Fenice daily during the evening, when she was kept busy about the house. At sunrise she left the house and remained all day in the mountains. Formerly it had been otherwise, as he gathered from her chance utterances. But even when she was at home there was never an opportunity to speak to her. She went about in general as if perfectly unconscious of his presence, and appeared to be ordering her life as formerly, yet her face had become like stone and her eyes as dead.

When Filippo, one day, enticed by the beautiful weather, had wandered farther than usual from the house, and with the feeling of new strength was climbing an easy height, he was startled as he turned the corner of a rock and unexpectedly saw Fenice sitting on the moss near a spring. She had distaff and spindle in her hands, and during the spinning appeared to be much absorbed. At Filippo's step she looked up, but spoke not a word, yet the expression of her face changed, and she quickly gathered up all her tools,

Then she went away, without heeding his call, and was soon out of sight.

The morning after this incident, he had just risen and his first thoughts were again turned to her, when the door of his room opened and the young girl calmly appeared before him. She remained standing at the threshold, and signed to him imperiously with her hand, as he was about to approach her hastily from the window.

"You are cured once more," she said coldly. "I have spoken with the old woman. She thinks you have strength to travel again by short day stages and on horseback. You will leave Treppi early in the morning, and never return. This promise I demand of you!"

"I promise it, Fenice, on one condition."

She was silent.

"That you go with me, Fenice!" He spoke with great, uncontrolled emotion.

A dark frown of anger overclouded her brow. But she restrained herself, and said, holding on to the door-knob: "In what way have I deserved to be made sport of? Make the promise without condition. I expect it on your *honor*, Signor!"

"Will you so thrust me aside, after you have instilled your love charm into me to the very core and made me your own forever, Fenice?"

She calmly shook her head. "There is no longer any charm between us," she said in a hollow voice. "You lost blood before the drink worked; the spell is broken. And it is well that it is so, for I have done

wrong. Do not let us speak of it any more and only say that you will go. A horse will be ready and a guide for wherever you will."

"If it is no longer magic that binds me to you, there is surely something else, for which you have no remedy. May God be gracious to me—"

"Be still!" she interrupted him, and closed her lips tightly. "I am deaf to such words as you are going to speak. If you think there is something due to me and are trying to pity me—then go and the account is therewith balanced. You shall not think that this poor head of mine can learn nothing. I know now that one can not buy a human being—as little by the pitiable services that go as a matter of course, as by seven years of waiting—which is also a matter of course, before God. You shall not think that you have made me unhappy. You have cured me! Go, and take my thanks with you!"

"Answer me, before God!" he cried, beside himself, and went nearer to her, "have I cured you also of your *love*?"

"No," she said firmly. "What is that to you? That is my affair; you have neither right nor power over it. Go."

With that she stepped back and over the threshold. The next moment he had fallen on the stones at her feet and was clasping her knees.

"If it is true, what you say," he cried in greatest sorrow, "then save me, receive me, take me up to you, or this brain, which only a miracle has kept together, will burst in pieces, along with the heart that you wish

to thrust aside. My world is empty, my love the prey of hate, my old and my new home banished me; what have I to live for, if I must also lose you!"

Then he looked up at her and saw the bright tears breaking from her closed eyes. Her face was still motionless; then she took a deep breath, her eyes opened, her lips moved, still without words. At one touch life was again blossoming in her. She bent down over him, her strong arms lifted him up—"You are mine!" she whispered trembling. "So will I be yours."

The sun as it rose the next day saw the pair on their way to Genoa where Filippo decided to retire before the plots of his enemies. The tall, pale man rode upon a safe horse, which his wife was leading by the bridle. On both sides extended in the clearness of the autumn the heights and depths of the beautiful Apennines; eagles circled above the ravines, and far away in the distance glistened the sea. And calm and shining like the ocean there the future lay before the wanderers.

THE STONEBREAKERS

BY FERDINAND VON SAAR



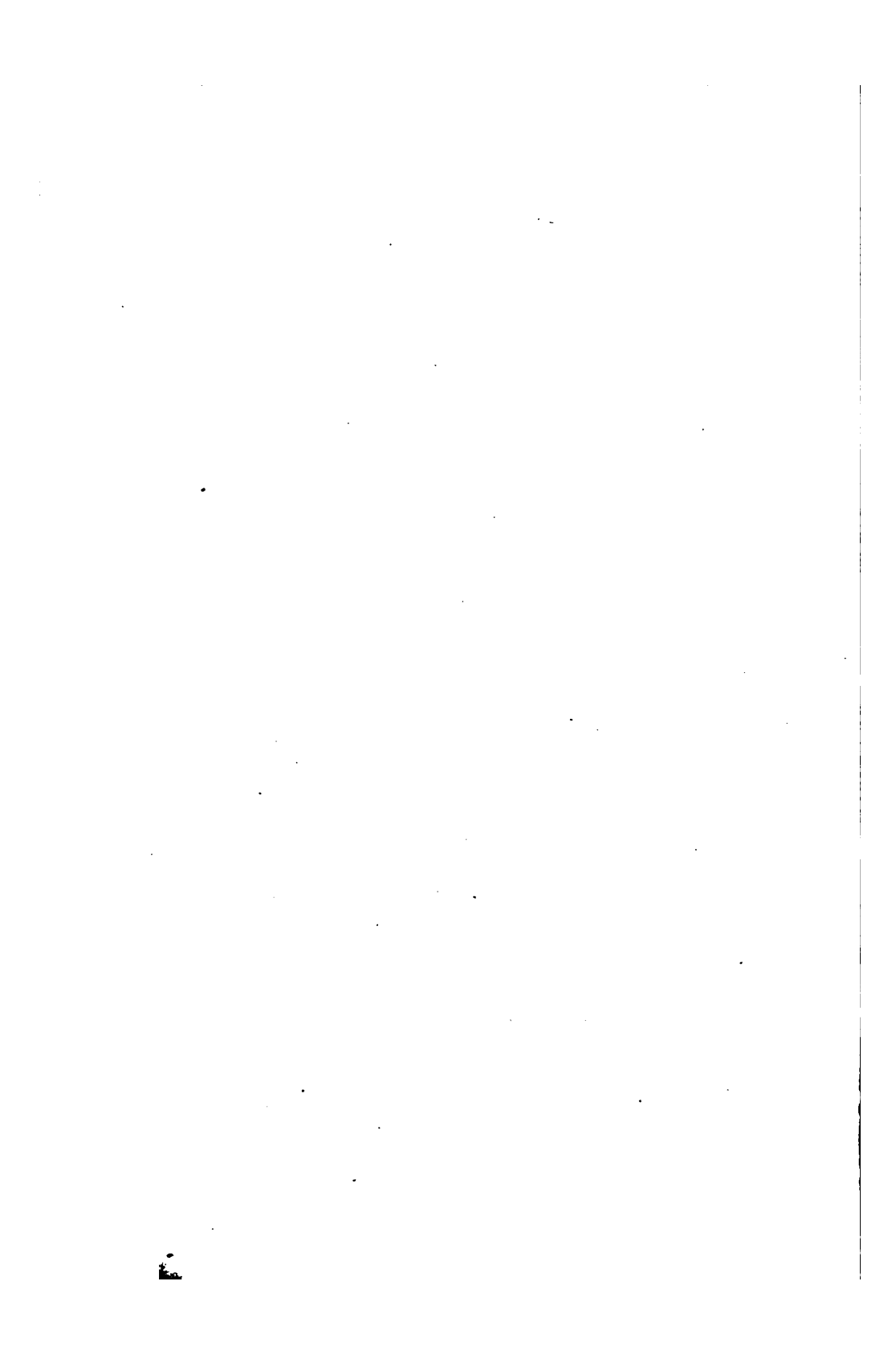
"The Stonebreakers," written in 1869, marks an epoch in German literature—it is the first of the "Arbeiter-novellen"—short stories of real laboring life.

The author, an Austrian nobleman, was born in Vienna in 1833. After the Italian campaign of 1859, he devoted himself to literature. Popularity, though late, came to him at last. In 1904 Vienna voted him an annual honorary stipend, and gave him a recognition that no Austrian author had received since the time of Grillparzer—he was elected to the Austrian Upper House.

Von Saar's position in literature is that of creator of the short story in Austria. His style is stately, calm, dignified, delicate, sympathetic, polished—one of the modern masters, with a profound knowledge of life in all its phases.

He has written comparatively little—besides his short stories, a few novels, dramas, idyls, occasionally touched, as in "The Stonebreakers," with a natural, easy, tentative realism. He died in the latter part of 1906.





THE STONEBREAKERS

BY FERDINAND VON SAAR

ONE of the most remarkable feats of civil engineering is the railway across the Semmering, a part of the Noric Alps, forming the borderline between the Duchy of Austria and the green plains of Styria. In these days the impression left upon the mind is not so overpowering, but years ago, when the road was new, travelers must have felt the astonishment and awe of men who see for the first time before their very eyes things believed by them to be impossible.

Along the tracks, winding about yawning abysses or deep walls of solid rock, the trains thunder over the dizzy heights of the viaducts, or with shrill whistle disappear into the night of seemingly endless tunnels. Long before Mont Cenis was bored through, or the Isthmus of Suez finished, trains of the Semmering issued from the tunnel and reached level ground, leaving their dangers behind, hurrying onward over the smiling meadows; surprise and awe soon changed to pride in the progress of the times, and the traveling son of the century, leaning back in his seat with half-closed eyes, must often have dreamed of the further marvels to be accomplished in time to come. But few, indeed, ever gave a thought to the thousands

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who, in the sweat of their brow and exposed to every kind of danger, had blasted the rocks, rolled the boulders, bridged the deep gorges, and, in fact, *created* that much-admired road that now carries us so easily from the restless, dust-swept metropolis to the shores of the blue Adriatic.

And now I am going to tell you a short story about two of these poor people, belonging to a class that from time immemorial has been faithfully doing its part in the great work of universal civilization. Alas! They have not yet reaped many of the benefits of this progress. But it is not my intention here to paint in vivid colors the unhappy fate of those pariahs of society who build our cathedrals and palaces, our universities and museums; nor do I wish to enlarge on the part which this so-called fifth class may have to play in the course of events—that I will leave to the sociologists. I wish to show you only a simple picture, drawn from the life of the masses whose meagre existence, with its terrible struggle for daily bread, goes on unknown and unnoticed, and finally passes away in some obscure corner without leaving a trace. I only wish to show you that in a small way the world's great tragedies repeat themselves everywhere.

The railway across the Semmering was finished. The cyclopean noise of the labor, the thunder of the blasting shots had died out, and the countless and restless crowds that had gathered here, coming from distant Bohemia, from the lowlands of Moravia and Hungary, from the stony Karst and sunny Friuli, had moved on toward the south to continue their labors

there. The wild animals that had been driven back into the deep woods were returning, and, as if out of curiosity, ventured upon the road which, still unused, was resting here like a forgotten trace of human energy in the quiet peace of the mountain. Only here and there, separated by a two hours' walk, perhaps, stood one of those large log cabins which the nomads of labor had once inhabited in swarms, and then in many cases torn down again on the eve of departure. In these parts were still living a number of laborers who had either been left behind or had arrived later, in order to put the finishing touches to the railway; for there were still tracks to be laid, the space between the rails to be filled out with crushed stone, telegraph poles to be erected, and the masonry work on the small houses built for the watchmen to be completed, although the graceful swallows, that perched all day in long rows on the electric wires, had begun to build their nests under the eaves.

On the threshold of one of these log cabins—it stood at some distance back from the tracks, supported against a steep, rocky wall—sat a woman. She was barefooted, had a coarse, dark kerchief over her head, and the face underneath looked worn and showed that sallow complexion which constant work in the hot sun gives to a naturally pale face. Her brow was deeply lined, and around the mouth lay such a sad, forlorn expression that it made the woman appear much older than her years, and served to accentuate the immaturity of her form. The sun no longer stood high in the sky; most of the mountain-tops and

slopes were already in deep shadow. But on the meadow in front of the house, and in the treetops along the wooded slope at its side, there still sparkled the bright sunshine, in which swarms of butterflies, bees, and dragon-flies played, dancing over the gay flowers.

The lonely woman heeded none of all this grace and loveliness that summer had spread before her; she never looked away from her work of repairing the torn blouse of some one of the men. It was hard work, for her rough, callous hands, which held the needle rather awkwardly, had probably been used to only hoe and shovel. Approaching footsteps roused her finally, and, looking up, she noticed a man coming from the tracks toward the house; his appearance was pitiable. Over his small, weak-looking body he wore a much tattered soldier's coat, which, far too long and wide, hung loosely about him, while a torn blue foraging cap was drawn far down over his face. He swayed in walking, although he held in his hand a knotty stick, on which he leaned heavily at times; the small knapsack that he carried strapped to his back was too empty to be much of a burden. As he drew nearer, his tired, colorless eyes looked shyly and embarrassed at the woman, who was watching him. "Is this Cabin No. 7?" he asked in a somewhat uncertain voice.

"Yes, it is," she answered, in that strange, harsh-sounding dialect spoken in Southern Bohemia. "What do you want?"

"I have been sent here to work." And he showed

her a slip of paper which he held in his hand. The woman was still looking with wonder at his strange dress and at the face so miserably pale and emaciated under the slight growth of beard. "The foreman is not at home," she said at last. "He has gone down the mountain to Schottwien to get a drink of wine. Sit down here in the mean time, if you are tired," And with one more look at the worn figure, she hastily took up her needle and thread again, suddenly remembering the work in which he had interrupted her. The man said nothing, only dragged himself a few steps farther, and then sat down on the grass with every indication of complete exhaustion. There he lay, while the sun sank lower and lower. Not a sound disturbed the peace; only high up in the azure of the evening sky a vulture was circling, emitting a long, drawn-out cry. Suddenly they heard in the distance the singing of rough and coarse voices. The busy woman started: "Heavens, there they are," she said to herself, "and the blouse is not yet finished."

Nearer and nearer came the singing, and before long there appeared a crowd of wild-looking fellows; in their midst, better dressed than the others, towered a man of Herculean size. He was probably fifty years of age; his broad and bloated face showed the effects of heavy drinking. Under the straw hat, which he had pushed far back, his gray hair hung in tangles. He had taken off his coat and thrown it over his left shoulder. In his right hand, that stretched, fat but sinewy, out of the loose sleeve, he carried a large basket, filled with provisions of all kinds. Two of the

other men carried heavy sacks with potatoes on their backs.

"Hello! Tertschka!" (Theresa) called out the man with the basket, in a hoarse voice; "give us some light in the house, so that we can take the provisions into the cellar." But when he stood before her and noticed the blouse she was holding in her trembling grasp, he added harshly: "Well, is it finished?"

"Not quite," she answered timidly.

"What? Not yet?" he shouted, and his face took on a bluish hue. "Did I not tell you that I needed it to-morrow?"

"I have worked hard all the afternoon, but I can't sew as fast as one who has learned to do such work."

The gentle yet firm tone in which she said these words seemed to enrage him all the more. "You always find some excuse!" he cried. "But I tell you, if I don't have that blouse to-morrow morning something will happen to you!" Putting his basket on the ground, he made a movement toward the frightened woman as if he were going to strike her. Just then he noticed the man in the soldier's coat, who was approaching timidly. "Who is that?" the furious man asked, dropping the hand that had been raised to deal the blow.

"He has been sent here to work," Tertschka said, breathing heavily.

The foreman, for he it was, planted himself with all the heaviness and importance of his big bulk before the small man, looking him over from head to foot.

"To work? Why, the fellow can't even stand on his feet!"

"I have had a long tramp," the other said. "I come from Ottertal."

"That is something wonderful!" sneered the foreman, trying to read in the dim light a slip of paper that was now passed to him by the trembling hand. "Your name is Huber?" he asked after a while, looking up again.

"Yes, George Huber."

"How did you get that uniform?"

"I am a soldier on furlough."

"What? You have served in the army?"

"Yes; seven years in the twelfth regiment. They sent me home now because I can not get rid of the fever I caught during the siege of Venice."

"Oh, fever, too! Well, they take all kinds of people in the offices! Most of them are cripples, to be used only as stone-crushers. Now, remember," he added, raising his fist in a threatening manner, "if you don't show me every evening two loads of crushed stone as a day's work, I will discharge you. This is not a hospital!" He took up the basket and went into the house, followed by the others. There he unlocked a heavy door plated all over with sheets of iron; it led into a cave that had been blasted into the rock and was now used as a cellar. While Tertschka held as a candle the piece of resinous pine which she had taken from the big hearth and lighted, the provisions were packed away. The foreman closed the door and retired behind a partition; the others stretched them-

selves out on straw, chattering among themselves, without noticing their new comrade.

George waited timidly at the entrance door; at last Tertschka went up to him. "Go and sleep there," she said, pointing to the straw.

He obeyed her, anxiously trying to occupy as little room as possible; he put his knapsack under his head, used his coat as a cover, and with a heavy sigh settled himself to sleep. Tertschka lighted a small oil lamp and, crouching near the hearth, took up her sewing again. At last she put the needle away and examined the blouse closely. Satisfied with her completed task, she blew out the smoking lamp and lay down near the hearth for the night, just as she was. Outside the summer night was filling everything with fragrance, and down through the opening in the roof the twinkling stars were shining into the dark room, the stillness of which was broken only by the breathing of the sleepers.

With the first signs of dawn, life began to stir in the house, and George awakened. He watched the men leave their crude beds, looking for the tools that had been left leaning against the wall; then they left the house. He, too, had risen, put on his coat, and now waited anxiously, not knowing what to do. Tertschka, carrying a heavy hammer with a very long handle over her shoulder, said: "The foreman is still asleep, but I know what your work is to be. Take that other hammer, and, if you like, you may go with me." Together they went out into the open air. It was cool and still; now and then a bird sang; the

meadows glittered with dew. Silently the two walked to the road, and then along the tracks to an old stone quarry; here they found some of the men already at work, while others were busy at the tracks with carts and shovels. Tertschka went up a little higher with George until they reached a hollow. "This is my place," she said, sitting down on the ground in the midst of stones and gravel. "I do not like to stay with the others; they are unruly and malicious. But you may stay here, if you like." Without answering, he sat down. "You see, all these broken stones have to be crushed into small pieces." And, pointing to a pile of them, she added: "All that I have done this week." He pulled a large limestone toward him and dealt it a blow with his hammer; the stone did not break. "Strike harder," said Tertschka; and she herself made the stones fly in all directions by her blows. He looked at her in astonishment and tried his strength once more. This time he had better success, so the two were soon eagerly at work without speaking at all.

The view from the place where they sat was wonderful and extensive, showing the gigantic heights and deep valleys of the mountain range. Quite close to the tracks and on a level with the road, the ruins of Castle Klamm could be seen, clinging to the rocks like an eagle's nest. Down below in the narrow valley lay the small town of Schöttwien with its red roofs. Behind towered the Sonnwendstein, and at its foot, on green meadows and surrounded by trees, stood the little church, called "Maria Schutz." But those

two busy people had no glance for the exquisite picture; with heads bent to the ground, they hammered and hammered incessantly, eagerly, dully. The sun climbed higher and began to shine burning hot on their heads. George's blows grew weaker and weaker; at last he dropped the hammer, took off his cap, and wiped his brow, on which the perspiration stood in large drops. Tertschka stopped for a moment, too, and looked at him kindly. "Are you tired already?" she asked.

"God knows, I am," he said, almost inaudibly; "the fever has weakened me more than I thought."

"But why did you come here, if you are so sick and faint?" she asked.

"What else could I do? Go begging? *Never!* I did not learn a trade, for my father and mother died when I was a small child; so I had to mind the geese and later the cows in our village until I was eighteen years old. None of the peasants ever hired me for work; I was not strong enough. The recruiting officers thought differently; they took me and put me into the white coat, saying: 'He is good enough to run along in the second rank.' Then when I was sick and miserable they sent me home. For a time the home parish took care of me. Then they, too, sent me away to work—to crush stones up here. Well, I do crush stones," he concluded, and a bitter smile passed over his face as he again took up the hammer.

She had listened quietly; and now very gently she said: "You can never stand such work!"

"Perhaps I can, if I could only get something to eat.

I have had bad luck lately, and since yesterday morning I have not had a morsel to eat."

She did not answer immediately, but took out a piece of black rye bread, which she had wrapped into her apron, broke it and gave him the larger piece. "Eat that!" she said.

He looked at it. "But that is yours, and you need it," he said, gently declining it.

"Never mind! I have enough left for myself," she answered.

And when he made no effort to take it, she laid it on the ground close to him. "You must be thirsty, too," she continued. "I will get you a drink of water; there is a good spring a little higher up." She arose, picked up a broken jug that was lying between the stones, and climbed to a place above the quarry, where some fir trees were growing and a small stream of water trickled from under the moss. She filled the jug, drank, filled it again, and returned. George had not yet touched the bread, but accepted the water gladly and gratefully.

"But now you must eat," she urged him, sitting down again. "You needn't hesitate to take it from me."

With rather a shamefaced manner he reached for the bread. "I suppose you have gone through a great deal of suffering or you wouldn't be so kind," he said, without looking at her, and, breaking off a small piece of the bread, he began to eat.

"Indeed, I have. Even now I know often enough what it means to go without food."

He felt as if he could not swallow his piece of bread. "Even now?" he asked after a while. "Do they pay so badly for work here?"

"I don't receive any pay at all."

"Why? What does that mean?"

"The foreman keeps my wages."

"The foreman keeps your wages?"

"Yes, he is my stepfather."

"Your stepfather?" he repeated, quite stupefied with astonishment.

"Yes; my own father met with an accident and died when I was very young; he was killed by some falling timber and earth. After his death my mother stayed with the foreman, who was at that time a dike laborer like my own father; they were working together in Bohemia."

"Oh, you are from Bohemia? That is the reason you speak with a different accent and have such a strange name! Ter— I can not pronounce it."

"Tertschka," she said. "It means 'Therese,' in German."

"Here in Austria they would call you Resi. But," he continued, "if your stepfather takes your wages, he must at least give you enough to eat."

"Just enough to keep me from starving. You have no idea how stingy he is. He himself lives well; scarcely a day passes without his drinking too much; but to others he would not give even a drop of water unless they paid him for it; he could see them all starve first before he would voluntarily give them a bite to eat. So I have to content myself with the

leavings, while he keeps my wages and also the forty florins¹ which my mother left to me. And that is not the worst. He is brutal and malicious and beats me cruelly quite often. You saw yourself yesterday how he lost his temper on account of the blouse I was mending for him."

"Yes, I did see it."

"My poor mother he treated in the same way. I firmly believe she sickened and finally died of consumption brought on in consequence of a violent blow he dealt her on the chest when he came home intoxicated and in a bad temper."

She was silent for a while, lost in all these sad memories. Finally George said: "If your stepfather treats you so badly, why do you stay with him?"

"Because I know he would never let me go away," she answered. "He needs this poor, helpless creature whom he can torture at will. With all his brutality and violent temper, he is, after all, just a coward. And besides—where should I go?" she added with a deep sigh. She took up the hammer again; George, now a little stronger, reached for his, too, and soon they were both hard at work.

Hour after hour passed; the burning heat of mid-day lay oppressively over mountains and valleys; not a sign of life anywhere, save the monotonous click of the hammers and now and then the call of a woodpecker and the rough singing of the men working along the tracks.

Suddenly there came the shrill sound of a bell.

¹ A florin is 48½ cents.

"What is that?" asked George, noticing that the laborers had laid down their tools and were walking toward the house.

"The foreman rang the bell; it is meal-time."

"Is it time to eat?" he asked, with a faint voice. "What do you get here?"

"Buckwheat gruel and potatoes. To-day probably some roast pork, too; they brought some meat up yesterday."

"It is very long since I tasted meat the last time," he said thoughtfully. "Who is doing the cooking here, tell me?"

"The foreman; he does not trust any one else. Besides, he likes to do it. This work up here he cares very little about and lets it all drift. Once in a while he goes about and inspects, never without scolding and cursing, especially those who have not the courage to answer back. And now I will give you a piece of advice: do not eat any meat to-day. You are still suffering from the fever, and it might hurt you. For you must know that man has no conscience whatever and often buys bad meat from the butcher at Schottwien. He pays very little for it and sells it here at a high price, for the railway officers have given him the sole right to deal in provisions, and every one here is compelled to buy from him all that is necessary; so he makes a great deal of money."

"Well, there is no danger of my buying any meat," said George bitterly. "I have no money."

"Oh, he would be glad enough to give you credit until Sunday, when the wages are paid. But wo to

you if you owe him money! He will not only charge you double for everything you take, but he will force you to drink and gamble with him until you are altogether at his mercy. You will never see one penny of your own money and will be forever in his power!"

George grew frightened as he listened to her. "But how can I manage to live until Sunday?" he said, crestfallen. "To-day is only Wednesday, and if I am not to take anything on credit I shall have to starve."

For some minutes she busied herself with the hem of her skirt, ripping out a part of the seam. At last she took out a crumpled paper, which she unfolded carefully; it was one of those notes of low denomination that circulated in Austria at that time and answered the purpose of coin; they were called "quarters." She passed this to George. "Take it," she said; "that is enough until Sunday, if you are careful. You can return it to me little by little, taking it from your wages every week."

He looked at the tattered paper in her hand, speechless with emotion. Surprise, joy, embarrassment, one after the other were reflected in his face.

"It is all that I have," she continued with simple confidence. "The engineer gave it to me when he was here last month. He had forgotten one of his instruments he had left at another station, and I had to get it for him. Really, it would please me very much if you would take the money. I am in constant fear of losing it; that is why I sewed it into my skirt. If the foreman knew of it he would have taken it long ago." She put it into his hand, adding: "And now let us go

to dinner. Don't forget what I told you about the meat. The flour is often musty, too; but there will be good potatoes at least; they brought some yesterday. And in the evening you might allow yourself a glass of gin; that will do you good." He got up and followed her silently; but for a few steps he stood still, looked earnestly into her gentle, brown eyes, and said with trembling voice:

"How can I ever thank you enough, Tertschka? No one has ever been as kind and good to me as you are."

"Oh, don't speak of it," she answered; "we ought to help one another in this world. And, besides, you would do the same for me, I know. You are kind, too; I saw it in your face when you came to the house yesterday." By this time they had reached the house. Inside they found the others, most of them eating from broken dishes. The foreman, with sleeves turned up and a big apron tied in front, stood by the stove, ready to carve a large piece of roast beef. Poor George heaved an involuntary sigh when he smelt the savory odor of the roast. All the men looked greedily at it, and each one in turn received a large piece, which he ate with his hand. Some of them paid in coin, but only a very few; the others bought on credit, the foreman keeping an account in a little book. George approached the man, holding a dish that Tertschka had given him. At first the foreman did not recognize him, but soon he remembered: "Oh, there is the little man who came yesterday!" he cried. "Well, have you done any work?"

"Yes, I have crushed stones!"

"And now you want something to eat, I see. What shall I give you?"

"I would like some porridge and potatoes."

The foreman filled his plate and took the money that George gave him. "Of course, you want a piece of meat, too?" he said.

It was a great temptation to the poor man, but he remembered Tertschka's advice, and only said:

"No, I do not care for meat."

"Oh, you are a niggard! You look starved; you ought to be glad to get something decent to eat."

"He has the fever," said Tertschka; "the fat meat might hurt him;" for she felt that George's will-power needed support to withstand the other man's gruff importunity.

"Hold your tongue!" he shouted. "How do you know what is good or bad for him! Don't you interfere; this is none of your business!" And turning to George, he asked again: "Well, do you want some meat or not?"

The words sounded like a command, *not* to refuse the tempting dish, but the man, shy as he was, took all the courage he could summon, and answered: "She is right; I ought not to eat any meat."

"Well, then, don't!" the other hissed, throwing the knife aside. "I'm not going to beg you to take it!" As George remained standing, he asked: "What else do you want?"

"My change," the other stammered.

"Oh, yes, yes!" the foreman shouted. "Do you

think I am going to keep your miserable pennies?" He threw him some copper coins and turned away scornfully. The money scattered in every direction about the room. George, with one hand occupied in holding the dish with food in it, had some trouble in picking up his change with the other. When finally he sat down in the corner to eat, his meagre fare had grown quite cold. He noticed that the foreman was pouring gin from a large green bottle into a small glass, then filling it again for the next man until nearly all had had their turn. George consoled himself with the thought of the treat in the evening, as Tertschka had advised. The girl too had received her dinner, meagre as it was, and now, at her stepfather's command, began to wash and scrub the cooking utensils. The workmen had already left the house and were seeking the shade outside, to stretch their tired bodies and have a short nap. The foreman now began to make preparations for his own meal; he took a small pan from the stove and put it on the table, with plate, knife, and fork; to these were added a bottle of wine and a glass. Then he sat down lazily, lifted a nice, fat chicken from the pan, and began to eat. All at once he noticed George, who was still sitting in the corner, with the empty dish between his knees, considering how he might manage to help Tertschka with her work, for secret fear of the brutal man before him made him hesitate. "What are you sitting there for, staring at me?" he heard him shout. "Leave the room as quick as you can! I don't want any spies here, to watch every mouthful I eat!"

George went out and lay down in the sun, all the shade being occupied by the others. After a while the bell sounded for work again; the foreman went into his room to rest. The men stretched and yawned and went very leisurely to work, some of them, indeed, not getting up at all, but turning over again for another nap. George and Tertschka went quietly to the quarry, and labored hard and faithfully until evening. During the days following they always worked together. George seemed to improve rapidly; he had enough to eat, and the invigorating air of this high altitude had a very lively effect upon his body, so worn out by fever. He swung the hammer quite vigorously now, and related to his companion his varied adventures during years of service in the army. They were by no means gay adventures, such as might happen in the life of a soldier of spirit; for, unfortunately, his shy and hangdog manner had caused him a great deal of trouble, so that he had seen only the dark side of a profession in which so many others find pleasure and excitement. He told her of his sufferings at the time he was a raw recruit, and when the tyranny of the corporal made life not worth living; of long nights of picket duty in snow and ice, of tiresome marches, followed by camping in rain and storm, and then—most interesting of all—of the time during the siege of Venice, when he stood with his regiment before Fort Malghera, where so many hundreds of them had died of typhoid and cholera. Tertschka listened attentively, although she understood only half of what he told her. It was all so far removed from her own

life that she could not even picture any of it to herself. How could she imagine a city built in the water! Even the word "ocean" meant nothing more to her than did a vague, far-away cloud. Yet instinctively she felt that George's life had been full of trouble, and in turn she told him all that she remembered of the sadness and misery in her own dull and monotonous existence. So they consoled each other, and were glad that they could go to work every morning together, and spend the long sunny days in the quiet quarry. Often they missed the call of the dinner-bell, or were startled by it, vexed because it compelled them to leave a solitude that had become so dear to them, and go down and mix with the rowdy men at the house.

But the time was not long during which these two were being drawn closer and closer together by their poverty, as others are by joy and pleasure and exuberance of life. Whether the foreman received information concerning them from some malevolent person or perhaps guessed at the state of affairs with the instinct of a bad heart, matters not; at any rate, one day he suddenly surprised them. "What are you doing here all by yourselves?" he cried. "Away with you to your comrades, you poor thing, where you belong!" With a gesture of command, he pointed toward the lower part of the quarry. George, dumb with fright, obeyed.

"And you, you spiteful creature," turning to Tertschka, "it seems to me you are too warm a friend of that cripple there? Just wait, I will cure you! If

I see you together again, he shall be discharged and you shall not see daylight for many a day."

So they were separated, rudely and suddenly. After that George was made to work on the tracks, and when he and Tertschka met in the house at noon or at sundown, they did not dare even to look at each other, far less exchange words. For the foreman observed them closely, and the others, too, seemed to take a kind of malicious pleasure in watching them.

One evening—it was a Saturday—the foreman and some of his companions had gone to an inn in one of the villages not far away; the other men had settled down to a game of cards, as usual, after receiving their weekly wages. As the noise and excitement grew louder and boisterous, George took courage to approach Tertschka, who was sitting on an old wooden box in her accustomed corner, her face buried in her hands.

"Tertschka," he said softly, taking a small, leather bag from his pocket, "here is the rest of the money that I owe you." And he put some kreutzers² into her lap.

"Oh, never mind," she answered; "you had better keep it, you may need it."

"What for?" he asked, disappointed. "All pleasure is gone for me since I can not work with you any more."

"Yes, I feel the same," she answered.

After a while he began again: "I wonder why he separated us? It must be a matter of utter indifference to him whether we sit together or not, as long

² An Austrian kreutzer is equal to about half a cent.

as we do our work well." She was silent. 'At last she said :

"He is a bad man, and can not bear to see any one else having a good time. He never allows one to go to church, yet he knows I can pray only when I am kneeling before the altar. How often he has scolded my mother because she wouldn't for anything miss going to church on Sunday, and always took me with her; *he*, indeed, knows no God or religion. But to-morrow I shall go to Schottwien, no matter what he says or does; I don't wish to become quite heathen among all these drunkards and gamblers."

She arose, opened the box on which she had been sitting, took out a woolen jacket, a calico skirt, and a pair of heavy shoes; also a faded, red kerchief and an old rosary with a cross of brass on it. All these things she laid carefully over the contents of the box, and closed the cover again.

George watched her. "I, too, have not been to church for a long time," he said. "Wouldn't it be fine if I could go with you to-morrow?"

"Yes, but it's impossible."

"Well, I don't know about that," he answered. "The foreman need not know of it. We might leave here, each alone on a different road, and then meet down in the valley."

She considered the plan. "You are right, it can be done. But you must start long before me. Close to the house, on the left side, is a narrow path, almost hidden under the trees, that leads directly down into the valley. When you come to the wooden cross on

the wayside, wait for me there. But you had better leave me now," she added, becoming anxious; "the others may notice our talking together."

He went back, threw himself on the straw, and fell asleep in the midst of the noisy quarreling of the gamblers.

The next morning, when George descended along the path of which Tertschka had told him, the world was full of bright sunshine. He looked eagerly ahead to find the cross in the valley, where they were to meet, and soon he saw it, toppling over and half rotten, surrounded by a few pine saplings. When he reached the spot he sat down on a moss-grown rock, which was lying in front of the cross, forming a natural praying-stool. The deep quiet of the Sabbath rested over everything; even the bees did not seem to be humming exactly as they flew over the dark-blue gentians that grew here in plenty. George felt himself listening to something, he knew not what, but it seemed like a solemn, yet gentle, ringing of bells, high above him in the air. But soon he became impatient. He walked about, picking gentians and other flowers, yellow and white, and thought as he looked at the nosegay in his hand: "I will give these to Tertschka when she comes." Finally he plucked some ferns and put them into his cap, where they waved like feathers. Now he saw a dress fluttering in the wind on top of the hill, and quickly he ran to meet her.

"Here I am," she said, a little out of breath. "I got away more easily than I expected."

George looked at her. She was without the kerchief

which she always wore over her head; her hair was parted simply and braided, and the red of her neckerchief shed a soft glow over her face. The dark jacket, somewhat broad, and the light skirt, both looked well on her. "How nice you look," he said slowly. She blushed. "All these things belonged to my mother," she told him, stroking the stiff skirt, that it might fall a little more gracefully. "I wear them so seldom, that is why they keep so well."

"Here are some flowers that I picked for you," said George. She took the bouquet which he had been hiding behind his back, and was about to pin it to her jacket, but it was too large, so she carried it in her hand, around which she had wound the rosary. Then they walked on through green meadows and fields, where the grain had been cut and shocked, until they came to Schottwien. Here there was great excitement; it was kermess (a sort of church fair), and the street was filled with vehicles and people in holiday attire. Booths had been built near the church, where all kinds of things were displayed for sale: kerchiefs and pipes, knives and beads of glass or wax, cooking utensils, gingerbread, and toys for the children. George and Tertschka looked admiringly at all these fine things, and George felt tempted to buy a pipe. He had smoked when he was a soldier; later, during his illness, he had to give it up, but now he thought, since he was earning his bread again, and neither drank nor gambled, he could allow himself the luxury.

Tertschka encouraged him when he told her of it, adding that she would go on while he made his pur-

chase. "In the village church," she said, "there are too many people, but about half an hour farther on is a lonely little church, where I have been before, and wish to go again to-day." She referred to the church called "Maria Schutz," at the foot of the Sonnwendstein.

George made his way through groups of hagglers and onlookers, and succeeded in buying a neat little pipe, with a porcelain bowl with gay tassels hanging from it. Suddenly a glittering ornament of yellow glass beads attracted his attention; he could not help thinking how nice it would look around Tertschka's neck. As the price was not too high, he bought it and put it into his pocket after wrapping it carefully in paper. With the few kreutzers left from his florin he bought a large heart of gingerbread, and some tobacco, and then, happy with all his treasures, he hastened after Tertschka. He showed her first the pipe, which she duly admired. Then he gave her the gingerbread heart; it had a picture on it of another small heart, pierced by an arrow, the whole surrounded by a wreath of flowers. "That is for you!" he said. She looked at it quietly, thanked him, and with a pleased smile put it between the bouquet and the rosary. "I have something else for you," he continued, drawing the little parcel from his pocket, and showing her the glittering beads. "Oh, how can you spend so much money for me!" she exclaimed, but her face beamed with happy surprise and joy. "I should like to spend everything I have for you," he said with fervor. "Please put it on now; it will be so becoming to

you!" She pushed everything that she was carrying into his hands and then tried to fasten the ornament around her neck, but did not succeed very well. "Let me do it," he said, and giving everything back to her again he stepped behind her, gently pushed away her braids, and fastened the clasp. "So, that is done!" With a happy smile he looked at her. Then they walked on, and soon reached the little chapel almost hidden under some fine, old linden trees. Here were only a few people worshiping; an old priest was officiating; he read mass in a rather indifferent manner. Tertschka knelt down in one of the last rows of seats, set her flowers and the gingerbread heart in front of her, and then folded her hands in prayer. George remained standing behind her. A strange feeling crept into his heart while in this quiet place, filled with a soft light that fell through the high arched windows; he heard the murmuring of the priest, the bell of the sacristan; his heart bowed in worship, but he could not say a prayer; he only looked steadily at Tertschka, whose lips were moving. The service was short; the priest spoke the blessing, and the worshipers left. Only Tertschka did not move; the sexton grew impatient and jingled his keys; at last she rose, crossed herself, and went to the door, followed by George. Golden sunlight greeted them outdoors, and not far from the chapel a prosperous-looking inn, with a great bunch of fir branches over the door, seemed very inviting. "Are you going home directly," asked George as Tertschka was turning toward Schottwien again.

"Well, where else could we go?" she answered.

"Over there into the inn. I think we might allow ourselves a treat to-day, Tertschka. Who knows when we may have such a chance again!"

"Well, if you wish it! Only the foreman will bully when I return so late. But you are right, we may never again go out together."

They walked toward the inn. In front of it, on a small knoll, stood an old beech tree, spreading its gigantic branches over a number of roughly hewn tables and benches. No one was sitting there at the time; everything was quiet; but in the house they seemed very busy. At last the landlord appeared, in snowy-white shirt sleeves, a small velvet cap on his head. He glanced at his rather odd-looking guests; but at George's order he brought a large glass of wine, bread, and meat, put it on the table where they were sitting, asked for his money, and then hurried back into the house. George pushed the plate toward Tertschka, who cut the meat into small pieces; then they divided the bread and began to eat, Tertschka using the knife, George the fork, for they had been served with one set only. The wine, too, they drank in turns out of the same glass. When they had finished eating, George lighted his pipe and contentedly watched the blue ringlets of smoke as they curled into the sunny air.

"Now, Tertschka," he said at last, "we never dreamed yesterday morning that so much pleasure was in store for us; did we?"

"No," she answered, "I never expected that!"

It was almost noontime. Suddenly there came the sound of horns and clarinets from the distance. The innkeeper came rushing out of the house, and called to the servants: "Hurry up, the bridal party is coming, and we have not yet set the tables." His orders were carried out instantly, and but just in time, for the procession was already in sight, preceded by a noisy crowd of boys and youths from the village. The musicians marched at the head, then followed the bride and groom, and behind them came all the relatives and other invited guests, and, of course, a large crowd of curious onlookers. In a moment the tables were all occupied, and soon eating, drinking, and making merry were in full swing, while the musicians played with great spirit. With what strange sensations the two watched all this gaiety. At first it was the crowd that excited their curiosity, but afterward Tertschka gave all her attention to the bride. She was very handsome, indeed; probably the daughter of a rich peasant. She wore a tight-fitting bodice of black velvet, that showed off her fine figure to great advantage; a chain of pure gold was wound five or six times about her neck, and the myrtle wreath in her blond hair, that fell in two heavy braids over her back, looked like a crown over her proud and rather stern face. The groom was very good looking too; quite contrary to the usual fashion among peasants, he wore a slight mustache, while his green felt hat, ornamented with chamois-beard and eagle's down, aroused George's envy. After a time, however, George and Tertschka began to feel oppressed with a sense of loneliness

among all these gay people, many of whom looked askance at them, as if to ask: "What business have you here?" Finally Tertschka turned to George: "Let us go away; we don't belong here! Come, let us sit down near the edge of the woods; we can see everything from there, and listen to the music too!" They went toward the dark pine woods that covered the hill on the other side of a sunny meadow; there they sat down on the slope and listened to the cheerful sound of the music, that drifted across the fields to them in subdued strains. Suddenly it stopped; they saw the people rising from their seats to form a half-circle; then the violins began again. "Oh, the bride and groom are dancing alone," cried Tertschka. And so it was. In measured time, circling gracefully, the two slender figures danced on the greensward.

"How happy they seem!" Tertschka continued, unconsciously leaning on George's shoulder. "Just look at them!"

"Yes, they are happy people," he answered dreamily, but without looking toward them. "When will our wedding day come, Tertschka?"

"Oh, George!" she said faintly, and stooped to pick a red flower that was growing near her.

"Resi"—it was the first time he called her so—"Resi, if you only knew how I love you!" and, shy and trembling, he put his arm around her.

She did not answer, but in her eyes, as she looked at him, there lay a world of happiness. Fast and furious came the sound of music from the inn, and the bridal couple, intoxicated by the strains and by the

shouting and clapping all about them, were dancing themselves into a delirium. George drew the girl to his heart, and their lips met in one long, passionate kiss.

My intention is to tell you this simple story just as it happened. Shall I try to describe the bliss that had come into the life of those two people? I would rather not attempt it. However, they had to conceal their new-found happiness as if it were a sin; yet it glowed in their souls all the warmer for that. With a humility inborn and constantly developed by their hard life they were content to greet each other with a stolen smile or press their hands in secret whenever they met in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. It seemed almost as if the foreman had relaxed his watchfulness, and they soon began to lose all fear of discovery, or even of his suspecting their walk to Schottwien. Sometimes as George came from the tracks to the quarry with his wheelbarrow to get the crushed stones, he would even dare to run up to Tertschka for a moment, and then the lovers forgot the world in a quick embrace and a kiss. One morning he had greeted her in this way when they suddenly heard a footstep quite close to them, and turning quickly in terror they saw the foreman standing there, his face distorted with fury.

"At last you are caught, you thieves!" he yelled. "Is that the way to obey me? You thought I did not notice what was going on, but I tell you I knew all the time of your doings last Sunday, and only waited to catch you in the act! I shall make you pay for all

this!" And he seized George by the back of the neck, and with brutal force swung him to the ground some distance away, where he fell among the stones. "Take your stones down, you jailbird, then pack your belongings and go! If you dare come near me again, I will beat you till I break every bone in your body!" With these words he ran shoving the man, already stunned from the fall, headlong down the hill; then he went back to Tertschka, and stared at her a long time with fury and malice in his eyes. At last he hissed: "You miserable wretch, you; I shall talk to you later!" and, muttering to himself, went away.

Dazed, almost unconscious, George picked himself up and went on to his place of work; mechanically he emptied the wheelbarrow; then he sat down on a stone and stared into space, unable to think. The clouds that had covered the sky early in the morning had become darker and heavier; a cold autumn wind blew through the trees and a penetrating rain began to fall. George did not feel the drops that beat into his face; sparks of fire danced before his eyes and hot and cold shudders shook him from head to foot. Gradually a realization of the insult to himself mingled with the burning sense of the injustice that was being done to both him and Tertschka. He was to be driven away from one who belonged to him by right of sacred bond! who had a right to do that? No one! And the longer he thought of it, the more his timid, long suffering heart rebelled, and a wonderful strength, a holy courage, began to kindle in him, ready to face and fight any power on earth that dared to take his loved one

from him. His insignificant features took on an expression of firm resolve, and his eyes shone with a strange fire. At last he arose and walked up to the place where he knew he would find Tertschka; the others looked at him in wonder. The girl sat and wept. "Do not cry, Resi," he said; and there was a new and strong ring in his voice.

She did not answer. He gently lifted her head, but she only began to weep the more passionately.

"Do not cry," he repeated. "It had to be, I suppose. But it is all right, and we know now what to do."

She looked straight before her.

"He has sent me away—and you will go with me!"

She did not seem to hear him.

"Down there, somewhere in Carniola, they are building a railway; we can easily find work there."

She shook her head slowly.

"You won't, Resi? And see, one more thing. I have been told that soldiers who have served their time and have gone through the war may claim a position as watchman on a railway track. I shall send in a petition, and perhaps if I succeed we shall have one of those little houses by the tracks and live in it as husband and wife. And even if that should fail," he added quickly—for she had not yet given a sign of consent, only kept on weeping more than ever—"well, then, we shall have to submit and work hard for a few years and save as much as possible. But just say one word, Resi!"

"Oh," she moaned, "what you say is all beautiful

and right, but you forget that the man will never let me go!"

"He *must* let you go. You are no longer a child. You don't belong to him. You are a laborer here, like all the rest of them, and can go when and wherever you please!"

"Believe me, George, he will *not* let me go; never, and certainly not with *you*. I have not spoken about it before"—the red blood colored her face deeply—"but I must tell you now. Even when my mother was still living, he pursued me with his hateful caresses; I threatened to tell my mother, and he kept away for a time. But last summer he left the others at the inn one evening and came home alone; he tried to make love to me and promised to marry me. But I told him what I thought of him, and now he hates me and tries to get his revenge wherever he can."

George grew pale to the lips and the breath struggled in his breast. "The scoundrel!" he panted. "And to think of your staying here with him! Never! You go with me, and I would like to know how he can prevent it!"

"George, beware of him! He is capable of murdering any one weaker than himself!"

"I am not afraid of him." And George drew up his slight figure until he looked like a different man. "He attacked me from behind and unawares; but now I shall be on my guard. Let us go to him, and quietly and firmly tell him of our resolution. You will see how he gives in; for, wicked as he may be, he *must* see that he has neither right nor power to keep you."

She wrung her hands in despair.

"Resi, take courage!" he said very earnestly. "Will you let me go alone?" She flew to him and clasped her hands around his neck.

"Well, then"—and he gently stroked her hair—"let us go!" Together they slowly walked toward the house; she with a heart full of anguish and fear of what she knew was about to happen; he full of confidence and indomitable courage. As they crossed the threshold, they saw the foreman sitting at the table peeling potatoes. He looked almost startled, seeing them enter together, but soon his surprise changed to anger and fury.

"What do you want here, you two?" he cried, half rising and grasping the knife firmly, as if for battle.

"You discharged me," George answered coolly, "and I am come to get my things and to tell you that Tertschka goes with me."

The foreman made a motion as if to throw himself upon George, but involuntarily drew back again before the quiet, determined face of the latter.

"I have nothing to say to such talk," he growled.

"You need not say anything," said George. "Tertschka is free to come and go as she pleases." The foreman laughed. George continued: "Now take what belongs to you, Resi," and, turning to look for his own knapsack, "then let us go."

The heart of the other man labored heavily. For a moment he evidently did not know what to do. Irresolutely he looked at Tertschka, who could not conceal her fear, then quick as a flash as she was going toward

her trunk he rushed at her and pushed her down into the cellar through the half-open door. He locked it and put the key into his pocket. "There, that is my answer," he stuttered, trembling all over with excitement, while he sat down at the table again, pretending to go on with his work.

This had all happened so quickly, so unexpectedly, that George did not have time to prevent it. But he controlled himself at once, and without a sign of haste, strapping the knapsack to his back, he walked leisurely toward the table where the man sat. "Let Tertschka out of the cellar!"

The hands of the foreman shook. And as George repeated his demand for the third time, vehemently, the man sprang up and clenched his fist. "Go at once—go!" he cried, "or—"

"Or what?" asked George calmly. "I am not afraid of you, though you are stronger than I am. It was easy enough to knock me down before, for I was then as defenseless as Tertschka is now, but now we stand face to face."

The man's color grew livid; hate, revengefulness, cowardice, struggled in his face. His fury almost choked him, and his hands shook as he stretched them out to seize something, he knew not what. George noticed all this, and his courage grew in consequence. "I advise you to give up freely what is mine," he said, "or I will take it by force."

At that moment some of the men entered; it was almost noon. Instinct had probably told them that something unusual was going on, and they did not

wish to miss it. Their presence had a stimulating effect upon the furious man; he felt safer, and his cowardice, of which he was well aware, now grew to temerity, by reason of this very fear of detection.

"Did you hear that?" he cried, addressing the men; "this miserable fellow dares to threaten me because I locked Tertschka in so that she could not run away with him."

"Don't insult us," cried George, whose blood was mounting in spite of himself. "We are two honest people. You have no right to lock up Tertschka!"

"What? I have no right? Why, the girl was brought up by me!"

"God have pity on her if she was brought up by you! I shall say no more; I will spare you before all these people!" And with that he pointed toward the men, who were watching the growing quarrel with a kind of dull pleasure.

"Listen to the dog! He will spare me, will he! Seize him and throw him out!" The men looked at each other irresolutely, but they did not move. Behind the cellar door there was an audible moaning.

"Do you see?" continued George with rising excitement, "no one thinks of laying hands on me. For the last time I tell you, set Tertschka free—or I will take the hammer to it."

"Out, you thief! or I will send for the police!"

"Let them come," cried George, in a passion. "Then we shall see who is in the right. They will find out why you locked Tertschka in; how you maltreated the poor girl for years, made her life miserable with your

shameful proposals, and took away her hard-earned wages as well as the money her mother left to her—to say nothing of that poor woman's death, which is on your conscience, too! And they will also discover how you treat the poor, defenseless workmen here, how you grow fat on the sweat and blood of their labor—!" George stopped. The weight and truth of these accusations filled the foreman's cup to overflowing, and he completely lost all self-control. His face took on the color of death, foam stood on his lips, his eyes started almost out of his head, and with a cry that might have come from a wounded steer he threw himself upon George with knife swinging in air. The latter had seized the hammer, and now brought it down with a thud upon the other's breast. The foreman swayed and fell moaning to the ground, the dark blood streaming from his mouth. For a moment there was silence; a mute, desolate horror held all present. George stood there like David by the body of Goliath.

"Resi, Resi!" he called suddenly, breaking open the cellar door with a few sharp blows. "You are free!"

"Jesu Maria!" she cried, hastening out and beating her hands together as she gazed at the dead man. "He is dead! Oh, George! George! They will take you to prison now and convict you for murder!"

"Let them; I will answer them. These people here will bear me witness that he attacked me with a knife. Go down," addressing the men, "and tell them that the laborer George Huber has killed the foreman."

It was some time before any one could make up his mind to go. George sat down with Tertschka in front

of the house; she wept constantly. Sometimes he gently stroked her face. At last two gentlemen from the railway offices appeared and a policeman. "We will have to give him up to the authorities," said the policeman. "He is a soldier on furlough."

The policeman tried to comfort poor, heartbroken Tertschka, telling her that the affair would not look very black for the prisoner if the facts were reported correctly. He even allowed her to sit at his side in the post-chaise in which they were to take George to Wiener-Neustadt. So they rode out into the night, while the rain fell in torrents, and the dead man, whom they had left behind, was taken to his last resting-place.

A military prison is a prison just like any other, with the exception that those who find themselves in it carry old, tattered uniforms on their backs. One finds there soldiers of every rank and color, and as these all feel themselves members of one profession, so more peace and harmony rules among them than is apt to be the case elsewhere, especially since the maintenance of the various differences in rank results in a certain kind of order and discipline. However, a prison is, and always will be, a sad, gloomy place, and it is not to be wondered at that George did not feel easy at heart when he arrived there on that dark night. A cross-looking turnkey had locked him into a room already overcrowded and in complete darkness. There was no straw mattress ready for him, so he stretched himself out on the bare wooden floor. All about him were men sleeping, but he could not sleep. During the long, sad drive from the station his buoyant courage

had begun to fail, and now doubt and worry crept into his heart. And when the morning dawned, and its pale light fell on the bare, dirty walls and unpleasant faces of his fellow prisoners, the seriousness of his situation oppressed him more and more. Not that he feared so much the result of his deed—he did not repent, he had been attacked and had only defended his life—but he saw the dead man before him, saw him lying in his blood, pale and stiff; and his warm heart, so full of sympathy for others, felt pity even for that man, and regretted sorely that all this had to come about. Unfortunately days and weeks passed without a summons to the court-room, without any indication of an investigation or trial. Added to this worry about his own future was a great anxiety with regard to Tertschka, of whose fate he knew nothing whatever, and whose companionship he missed sadly. Through the efforts of the honest policeman the poor girl had found lodgings and even work among the masons on some new building. No one who saw her carrying buckets filled with brick or mortar would have guessed that her heart was nearly breaking with sorrow and grief. In the evening, when work was finished, or on Sundays and holidays, she wandered about that part of the barracks where the prison stood, and looked up to the barred and shuttered windows, trying to catch a glimpse of George's face somewhere. Several times she had been scolded by a sentry and driven away. In her distress she finally appealed to the guard at the gate, and begged him to tell her where George Huber was; she wanted to speak to him. They only laughed

and jeered at her. One day an amiable-looking non-commissioned officer took pity on her and promised to find out where the prisoner was lodged and tell him of her wish. She herself was not allowed to speak to him without permission from the judge-advocate. It would be well for her to see that gentleman, but she must do so early in the morning; during the day he could never be found at home. The very next Sunday, then, Tertschka dressed herself in her woolen jacket and calico skirt and went early in the morning to the judge-advocate's house, which the officer had pointed out to her. She had to wait in the hall a long time, for the gentleman was still asleep, so she was told. At last he came from his room, dressed to go out, and asked hurriedly what she wished. He scarcely listened to what she had to say, told her that permission to see prisoners could be given only in very rare cases; but she need not worry, the whole affair would soon come to a close. She went away without much comfort. Again week after week went by and no progress in poor George's affair. To tell the truth, the judge was a gay young man, more interested in the beautiful ladies of the town than in his legal documents, and anything that concerned soldiers on furlough he particularly liked to put off as long as possible. Tertschka's heart filled with ever-increasing anxiety; she spoke again to the amiable man who had advised her before. He considered there was nothing left for her to do but to see the Colonel of the barracks. To be sure, he was a very grave, stern man, yet he was always ready to help others. She decided to follow

the officer's advice again, and went to see the commandant. There, too, she had to wait a long time, yet not in the hall, but in a warm room. As it was a cold winter's day, she felt grateful for this. In the next room she heard the click of sabres; some officers then stepped out and went away, looking somewhat depressed, as she thought. After a while the door opened again. A fine-looking man with a slightly gray mustache looked out, and asked in a gruff tone what she wanted. She was frightened and began to cry; then his manner changed, and he asked her kindly to come in and sit down. He listened in silence to her petition. After she had finished, he questioned her a little and made her tell the whole story. She did so in a very simple, often awkward, manner; but her warm, true heart spoke out of every word so frankly that the Colonel seemed deeply touched. Finally he laid his hand very gently on her shoulder and told her to be of good cheer; he gave his word of honor that the matter should be attended to immediately. With a load lifted from her heart she left him. The Colonel, however, walked up and down in his room, deep in thought, clicking his spurs together from time to time. At last he called an orderly and sent him with a message to the judge-advocate. He had to wait a long time before that young gentleman appeared, looking quite flushed and bowing low.

"I have been told," began the Colonel, "that about four months ago a soldier on furlough—his name is George Huber—was brought here for court-martial."

The judge put his hand to his brow, as if to reflect.

"Yes, yes, George Huber!—a case of manslaughter."

"I wish to have the trial brought to a speedy end."

"Easy enough," the other one said, evidently quite relieved. "It is a very ordinary story. We let the man run the gantlet a few times, and the matter is settled."

"My dear sir," answered the Colonel, "that would be a very superficial and arbitrary mode of procedure. And I am most anxious to see this case handled with the greatest care. Allow me to remark—with all respect for your judicial knowledge and experience—that there are very exceptional circumstances involved in this case; I have convinced myself of that." The Colonel drew his eyebrows close together at these words; the judge knew what that meant, bowed in silence and departed. He went straightway to his office, and, as he did not lack ability and quick insight, had the matter soon sifted, examined the witnesses, Tertschka among them, and the court-martial pronounced the following sentence: George Huber, soldier on furlough, of the Twelfth Regiment, is guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to one year of hard labor. Considering that there were extenuating circumstances, also that his conduct during the time of service in the army has been irreproachable, the long term of imprisonment while awaiting trial is considered punishment enough.

The young judge's face flushed a little; but it flushed even more when he took the sentence to the Colonel for approval, and the Colonel, after reading the paper, said with a smile: "Now and then even negligence of duty may bring about good results."

Two days later the Colonel sent for George and Tertschka. He looked at them long and silently, asked a few questions, and advised them to stay in town for the present. He would see that they found work enough to earn a living; later on they would hear from him again. After they had gone, the Colonel again walked up and down the room, as he had done the day before, clicking his spurs together from time to time. Strange thoughts were passing through his mind. Many years ago he had been deeply in love with a beautiful, fair woman, and had been very unhappy. Not that the lady rejected his love—such a disappointment his proud, young heart could have overcome—but he had been cruelly deceived in his most sacred feelings; and that had filled him with a lasting bitterness and an unnatural contempt for the whole sex, a contempt which he very plainly liked to show. He was anxious for the world to know that he did not believe in love, and now, after so long and passionately upholding this opinion in opposition to a gentle voice in his inmost heart, these two poor, half-starved people were proving to him the real existence of love, love in all its depths, devotion and tenderness, in its holiness and strength!

Over there, where the grizzly railroad tracks wind in and out along the banks of the rushing Mur, past green meadows and fertile fields, not far from the Castle of Ehrenhausen, which looks down from its wooded height on the town of the same name, stands a lonely little house, belonging to one of the watchmen of the railway. Back of the house is a small

piece of land, planted with corn and vegetables, while in front there is a little flower garden, where mallows and sunflowers bloom, fenced in by a hedge of beans. In this house, whose peaceful charm delights all travelers, George and Tertschka have been living now as man and wife for more than fifteen years. It is scarcely necessary to say that the stern colonel assisted in settling them there. The couple look little older than they did when we first met them. Though dividing the duties of a very responsible service, they still find time and opportunity to take care of their little piece of land, of a goat, and several chickens, and to bring up two flaxen-haired children, late-comers, but very welcome, who sprout up merrily behind the bean hedge. Sometimes they have a quiet hour to themselves, when they sit down, hand in hand, on the bench before the door, and, looking out toward the setting sun, remember gladly the day when they first met on the heights of the Semmering. Again they live through the sorrows and joys of the past to the moment, the terrible moment, when a cruel fate seemed to be crushing them forever, which yet has led them at last to this peace and happiness. And if across the path of their memories a dark shadow still lingers, they call their children, that come nestling so close to their hearts and look out with their big eyes so innocently into the world as if there were never a strange and changeable fate pursuing man from generation to generation as long as he finds breath on this old earth.

THOU SHALT NOT KILL

BY LEOPOLD VON SACHER-MASOCH



Leopold, Chevalier de Sacher-Masoch, was born in 1835 at Lemberg, capital of Galicia, where his father was chief of police. He died at Lindheim, Hesse, in 1895. He studied at Prague and at the Gratz University, where later he became professor of history.

The success of his first romance, "A Galician Story," published in 1835, induced the author to resign his professorship here, but he afterward accepted another chair at the University at Lemberg.

The best of his tales, most of which are short stories, are those that present Galician life or little Russian, or Jewish, all lighted by a graceful, keen, but amiable humor and sympathy—a man of the world's tolerance for all phases of human nature.

The word "Masochism" has been invented to characterize a unique species of erotic character frequently found in Sacher-Masoch's stories.



THOU SHALT NOT KILL

BY LEOPOLD VON SACHER-MASOCH

COUNTESS MARA BAROVIC was the Circe, Omphale, and Semiramis of the mountainous part of Croatia.

Old and young (men, be it understood) were at her feet; and this despite the fact that she was regarded as plain-looking rather than pretty. Her ugliness, however, was the sort that strikes attention, attracts consideration, and excites interest. Moreover, she boasted a "past" that cast a halo about the present.

It was rumored that one of her lovers had "accidentally" shot her husband while out hunting, and that this accident had occurred at a time when the Count had become "embarrassing."

Besides, she was original.

If it be true that woman is a work of art, as a celebrated poet has said, it must be borne in mind that in these days the agreeable and pleasing in art is no longer "the thing." Cruel, unadorned truth is preferred to draped loveliness, in love as well as in art.

The Countess belonged to the type demanded by the modern school. By her two most ardent admirers, Baron Kronenfels and Mr. De Broda, she was termed respectively the iconoclast and the naturalist.

She mounted her horse like a hussar, was a dashing

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whip, and indulged a passionate fondness for hunting. One of her favorite pastimes was roaming field and forest in the picturesque costume of the Croatian peasant; and she could apply the horsewhip as dexterously and mercilessly to her creditors as to her refractory horses.

The fair lady was head over ears in debt. There was nothing she could longer call her own, not even the furniture in Château Granic, not even the false braid which adorned her well-poised little head.

The young aristocrats who danced attendance upon her ladyship explained the preference displayed by this Croatian Circe for the "wise men of the East"—as they called Kronenfels and De Broda—by the brilliant financial position of her two Jewish admirers.

Of the two, Baron Kronenfels's noble birth rested upon the more ancient foundation, and for that reason, perhaps, he enjoyed a certain priority in the fair lady's preference. De Broda was a mere sapling in the forest of aristocracy, having been but recently ennobled. The unfeigned adoration he displayed for his armorial bearings made him the butt of endless practical jokes. His coat-of-arms glittered wherever it could find a resting-place. It shone upon the collar of his dog; it was emblazoned on his cigarettes, made especially for him at Laferme's.

Despite certain differences of taste, Kronenfels and De Broda were good friends, good comrades as well, for they were both officers in the Reserve. But how often does friendship stand its ground against the whispers of jealousy, especially when a woman's favor

is the prize at stake? The relationship between the two grew strained and unnatural, and they were both secretly conscious that they were walking along a path where the least deviation from the centre would result in a catastrophe.

The long-looked-for altercation took place one evening at the club. Wine had been flowing freely, the betting had been high. Countess Mara was the subject under discussion, and Baron Roukavina was telling an amusing story in that lady's eventful life.

She had not paid her taxes for years, was threatened with an execution, and had been moving heaven and earth to avert the impending disgrace. She had gone to Agram, from there to Buda-Pesth, importuning ministers, seeking favor with deputies, and had actually got so far as to ask an audience of the king. She had received hopeful promises everywhere, but the danger hung heavier over her head with the passing of every hour.

At this particular juncture, Baron Meyerbach called on her, and offered to settle her troubles. Meyerbach was an intelligent fellow, with a good heart, and a purse with the proverbial open mouth; but Hungarian aristocracy could not receive him within its inner circle for the simple reason that he was a Jew.

"Have you so much influence?" asked the Countess. Her breath was almost taken away by the offer.

"Do not inquire too closely into my *modus operandi*, Countess," said the Baron. "It must be sufficient for you to know that my success is assured."

"And what do you ask in exchange for this service?"

"Simply this: that for the next two weeks you will take a walk with me every day for an hour in Vaitzen Street; that you will skate with me an hour in the park; and that each evening you will give me the privilege of escorting you to a different theatre."

"And is that all?"

"All."

The Countess yielded willingly to the Baron's terms. At the end of the fortnight, she received a receipt in full for the payment of her taxes—thirty-two thousand florins—and Baron Meyerbach found Hungarian aristocracy ready to receive him with open arms even within its most inner of inner circles. The Countess had launched him.

The story closed in a burst of laughter, and the diplomat Meyerbach's health was drunk repeatedly and variously.

Of all the convivial party, De Broda alone was silent. Finally, with Goethe's words in mind, he said in a low voice: "Everybody seeks money, and everybody clings to it."

Kronenfels flung his cards noisily on the table, looked savagely at De Broda, and said, with an ugly frown: "Do you imply by that that such a woman as Countess Mara Barovic would willingly let herself be blinded by money?"

De Broda shrugged his shoulders.

Springing from his seat, the Baron cried out, scornfully: "You are a Jew."

For a moment, participants and listeners seemed paralyzed with astonishment; then De Broda, every nerve tingling with rage, hurled angrily back at his assailant: "You are another!"

A challenge to a duel was the result of the quarrel. Seconds were chosen on the spot, the weapons were to be pistols, and the oak forest near De Granic was to witness the affair early the following morning.

De Broda had gone home. He was arranging his papers in order, when Rabbi Solomon Zuckermandel walked into his sanctum.

"You are going to fight?" were the old man's first words.

"Yes."

"And with a Jew? No, Mr. De Broda; you can not, you dare not shoot a man! You will not do it."

"Pardon me, Rabbi Solomon, but my knowledge is somewhat deeper than yours in affairs of honor."

"Do you think so!" replied the old man, with an indulgent smile. "Ah, well, we shall see. You think we can wash our honor only in blood? My dear Mr. De Broda, spotless honor needs no washing; and if it has a blemish, it can not be effaced even by blood. The Baron called you a Jew. Is that an insult?"

"In the sense he attached to the word, yes."

"Not so. Neither in that sense nor in any other. Does the name of soldier become an insult because soldiers have deserted their flag? The Jews we call to mind when the word 'Jew' is used in reproach are those who have forsaken their standard. They are no

longer Jews. Judaism is the fear of the Lord, love of liberty, love of the family and humanity. The honor of the Jew consists not in spilling blood, but in acting uprightly and doing good."

"You are right; but—"

"No, no. No 'buts.' When God in the midst of thunder and lightning gave the Tables of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai, there were no 'buts'; He said: '*Thou shalt not kill!*' You are a Jew, Mr. De Broda. In other words: Man, thou shalt not kill!"

The young fellow turned toward the window. The rabbi should not see his emotion. But the Jewish heart was touched, and the old man who gave no thought to title and coat-of-arms had conquered the aristocrat's pride and prejudice.

Midnight had struck when Rabbi Solomon reached Kronenfels's quarters. The letter he handed the Baron from his adversary read as follows:

"DEAR SIR—You have insulted me grossly in calling me a Jew in the presence of a number of gentlemen, and have added to the insult, as it were, by making it at a time when Mr. De Treitschke in Berlin has spoken of the Jews as the schlamassl [the plague of the Germans]. You are, however, an only son, the pride of your family, and I should like to avoid our meeting for to-morrow. You have often seen me hit the ace at a good range; and you know as well that I am no phrase-maker. I propose, therefore, that we shall both shoot in the air, and that we shall mutually

exchange our word of honor not to speak of this arrangement. BRODA."

Kronenfels held the letter to the rabbi.

"What is to be done?" he asked, with a smile.

"Mr. De Broda has proved himself a true Jew," responded Zuckermandel, gently. "Do not let him surpass you. Prove to him that you, too, are of a race which, boasting the most ancient civilization, is above all others from the humanitarian standpoint."

Kronenfels wrote some hurried lines which Rabbi Solomon conveyed to Mr. De Broda before daybreak. The Baron's answer was couched in these words:

"DEAR SIR—I was about to address you when I received your note.

"I, too, should deeply regret having a mortal encounter with a young man upon whom so many hopes are placed.

"I accept your proposition.

"Moreover, between ourselves be it said, we are Jews—in other words, descendants of ancestors whose house is more ancient than that of the Lichtensteins or Auerspergs, ancestors who have transmitted to us two qualities which Mr. De Treitschke could scarcely possess, being as it were the offshoot of a somewhat recent civilization: and these are, repugnance to shed blood, and the "rachmonni"¹ of the Jewish heart.

"KRONENFELS."

¹ The exact translation of "rachmonni" is "merciful." It is used as a name of God, because the Jew does not pronounce the proper name of God except in his prayers.

The duel took place at six o'clock in the morning, the venerable oaks of De Granic forest casting an air of solemnity over the bloodless scene. The adversaries kept their word; the pistols were discharged in the air; and the witnesses declared that honorable satisfaction had been made. As De Broda and Kronenfels were shaking hands with hearty good-will, the brushwood parted, and old Rabbi Solomon slowly approached the young men. Raising his arms in benediction, he said, and the light of happiness beamed from his eyes: "Gentlemen, you are Jews!"

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

BY RUDOLF BAUMBACH



Baumbach is to-day preeminent in that field of romantic short story where the earlier German writers loved to dream and weave their symbolic figures out of the threads of human nature and the colors of mysticism.

Baumbach, born in Kranichfeld, Thuringia, in 1840, was for a time student of natural sciences at Heidelberg and other universities, but preferring the life of a traveler to that of a student of books, he spent much of his life abroad before settling down as court counselor at Meiningen.

His first literary success was a collection of poetical tales, fresh, rich in coloring, pictures of South German folk-life, sound, true, and sympathetic, and not so deep as to submerge the outlines of the plot.



THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

BY RUDOLF BAUMBACH

IT was on the day of the summer solstice, and the glow of midday lay on the corn-fields. At times a fresh wind swept over from the mountain forest near; then the stalks bent low, and the poppies on the edge of the field scattered their delicate petals. Crickets and grasshoppers chirped in the grain, and from the blackthorn on the roadside the goldhammer once in a while let her gentle call be heard.

Through the corn-field, which extended from the valley to the mountain, walked, in the narrow path, a young woman of slender yet strong figure. She wore the customary plaited skirt, and, for protection against the sun's rays, a red kerchief; on her left arm hung a basket, and in her right hand she carried a stone jug.

As the goldhammer in the thorn-hedge became aware of her presence he fluttered to the highest twig and called softly: "Maiden, maiden, how do you flourish?" But the bird was mistaken. The blond Greta was no maiden, but a young wife, and now was on her way to her husband, who felled wood in the forest above.

When the fair one had reached the border of the forest she stood listening, and soon the strokes of a woodman's ax told her where to turn her steps. It was not long before she saw her husband, who felled a pine tree

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with mighty strokes, and, with joyful voice, she called to him.

"Remain standing where thou art," responded he. "The tree will fall directly." And the pine tree gave a deep sigh, bowed itself, and sank crashing to the earth.

Now Greta came nearer, and the sunburnt wood-gutter took his young wife in his arms and kissed her fondly. Then she sat down on the trunk of the tree, and took the food from the basket she had brought. Here Hans laid down the bread from his hand, took his ax, and said: "I have forgotten something," stepped in the direction of the fallen pine, and cut three crosses in the wood.

"Why dost thou that, Hans?" asked the wife.

"That was done on account of the wood-sprites," explained the husband. "The poor creatures have a wicked enemy, who is the wild hunter. Day and night he waylays them and hunts them with his dogs. But if the pursued little women succeed in escaping to such a tree-trunk, then the wild huntsman can not harm them, because of the three crosses."

The young wife's eyes grew large. "Hast thou ever met a wood-sprite?" asked she, curious.

"No. They only rarely let themselves be seen. But to-day is the solstice, when they become visible." And suddenly he called with a loud voice into the forest: "Wood-sprite, appear!"

He had only done this in order to tease his wife; but, on the holy midsummer day, one should not jest about such things.

At once a little woman, a yard high, delicate of form

and very beautiful of face, stood before the pair. She wore a long white garment, and in her golden hair a spray of mistletoe.

Hans and Greta were very much frightened. They rose up hastily from their seats, and Greta made a bow, the best she could do.

"You have called me at a good time," said the wood-sprite, and pointed with forefinger to the orb of the sun, that stood almost over her head, "and a good deed"—here the little woman pointed to the marked tree-stump—"is the other reason. Gold and silver have I not to give away, but I know of something better. Come with me; it will do you no harm, and take your jug: you will be able to make use of it."

So she spoke and led the way. Hans shouldered his woodman's ax, Greta took up the stone jug, and both followed the little woman. She had a walk like a duck, and Greta plucked her husband's sleeve, pointed to the waddling little woman, and would have whispered something into his ear, but Hans laid his forefinger on her mouth. Nothing hurts a sprite more than to have a person ridicule their gait. They have feet like a duck, and therefore they wear long, flowing garments to hide them.

After a short time the three arrived at a clearing. Very old trees stood in a circle around the meadow; out of the grass arose lilies and bluebells, and great butterflies rested thereon, waving their wings to and fro. And Hans, who thought he knew the whole forest, could not remember to have ever crossed this place.

On the edge of the meadow stood a small house.

The walls were covered with the bark of trees, and the roof was shingled with the scales of pine cones, and each scale was fastened down by a rose-thorn. Here the wood-sprite was at home.

She led her guests behind the house, and pointed to a spring whose water gushed silently from the black earth. Succulent coltsfoot and irises grew on its brink, and over its surface danced green and gold dragon-flies.

"That is the fountain of youth," said the wood-sprite. "A bath in its water turns an old man into a boy and an old woman into a girl. But if one drinks the water then does it ward off old age until death. Fill your jug and carry it home. But be economical with this precious water; a drop on each Sunday is enough to keep you young. And yet again: As soon as thou, Hans, dost cast thy eye on a strange woman, or thou, Greta, on a strange man, then the water loses its virtue. That mark you. Now fill your jug and fare you well."

So spoke the wood-sprite, refusing the thanks of the lucky couple, and went into the house. Greta filled the jug with the water of youth, and then they hastened home as quickly as they could to their cottage.

Arrived at home, Hans poured the water into a bottle and sealed it with fir resin. "For the present," he remarked, "we do not find the water of youth necessary, and we can economize. The time will come, indeed, when we will need it." And then they placed the bottle in the cupboard where they kept their treasures: a couple of old coins, a garnet chain on which hung a

golden penny, and two silver spoons. But Greta took great care that the water lost not its virtue.

And how they did take themselves in hand! When the young forester went by the garden before the house and exchanged a greeting with Greta, as indeed had been his custom, then Greta looked not up from her vegetable-bed. And when Hans sat in the evening in "The White Stag," and the pretty Lisi brought him wine, then he made a face like a cat during a storm; and finally he did not go any more to the inn, but remained at home with his wife. Thus the water must certainly retain its magic power.

So there passed for the young couple a year of love and happiness, when to the two came a third. In the cradle a chubby boy kicked and cried, so that the father's heart leaped for joy. "Now," thought he, "is the time come for us to open the bottle. What thinkest thou, Greta? A drop of the water of youth would do thee good."

The wife agreed to the proposition, and Hans went into the room where the magic potion was preserved. With hands trembling with joy he loosed the cork and—Oh, wo, wo!—the bottle slipped from his hands, and the water of youth poured over the floor. He came near falling to the floor, he was so frightened over the misfortune. What was he to do now? His wife must on no account learn what had happened; she might die from fright.

Perhaps he could tell her later what he had done; perhaps, also, he might find the fountain of youth again (which he had certainly sought in vain), and he might

replace the loss. He hastily filled a new bottle, which was just like the first, with well-water, and well-water it was also that he gave his wife.

"Ah, how it refreshes and strengthens one!" said Greta; "take a drop also, dear Hans."

And Hans obeyed and praised the virtue of the magic potion, and from that time each one took a drop every Sunday when the church-bell was ringing. And Greta bloomed like a rose, and Hans's veins swelled with health and strength. But he postponed the confession of his deed from day to day, for he hoped in his heart to yet find the water of youth; but roam through the forest as he would he could not discover the meadow where the wood-sprite lived.

Thus passed some years. A small maiden joined the little boy, and Frau Greta's once round chin had become double. She herself certainly saw it not, for the mirror was not yet in existence in those days. Hans saw it, indeed, but avoided speaking of it, and redoubled his love for his portly wife.

Then there happened a misfortune. At least Greta held it to be such. As she swept the house one day the small Peter, her eldest, came upon the cupboard in which stood the bottle with the supposed water of youth and clumsily overthrew the bottle, so that it broke and the contents were spilled.

"Oh, thou gracious Heaven!" lamented the mother. "It is lucky, though, that Hans is not at home." With trembling hands she gathered up the fragments from the floor and replaced the bottle by another, which she filled with ordinary water. "Certainly the deception

will soon be found out, for now is it all over with the everlasting youth. Alas, alas!" But for the present she did not wish to tell her husband anything about it.

Again considerable time passed, and the couple lived together as on the day when the priest had joined their hands in marriage.

Each one carefully avoided letting the other know that youth was past, and each Sunday conscientiously took the magic drop.

Then it happened that one morning a gray hair remained between Hans's fingers as he combed his hair. And he thought: "Now is the time for me to tell the truth to my wife." With a heavy heart, he began: "Greta, it seems to me that our water of youth has lost its strength. Look there! I have found a gray hair. I am getting old."

Greta was frightened, but composed herself, and, forcing a loud laugh, cried: "A gray hair! When I was a little girl, ten years old, I had even then a gray lock amid my hair. The like has frequently happened. Thou hast lately dressed a badger; perhaps something has happened to your hair from the fat, for badger's fat, you know, colors the hair gray. No, dear Hans, the water has not lost its old virtue, or"—here she cast an anxious glance on him—"or perhaps thou also findest that I am growing old?"

Now Hans laughed very loudly. "Thou, old! Thou bloomest, indeed, like a peony!" And then he threw his arms about her and gave her a kiss. But when he was alone he said, with quiet thankfulness: "God be

thanked! She knows not that we are getting old. Now it matters not."

And similarly thought the wife.

On the evening of the same day the young folks of the village danced to the fiddle of a wandering musician, and no couple wheeled more merrily under the linden than Hans and Greta.

The peasant women made sarcastic remarks, to be sure; but the two heard nothing of the ridicule in their happiness.

After that it happened in the fall, as Hans with his family was eating a Martinmas goose, that Frau Greta broke a tooth. There was great lamenting, for she was so proud of her white teeth.

And when the couple were alone together the wife said, in an unsteady voice: "This misfortune would not have occurred if the water—"

But at this Hans blurted out: "You think the water is good for everything. Has it not often happened before that a child has broken out a tooth by cracking a nut? What hast thou against the excellent water? 'Art thou not fresh and sound as a rose? Or perhaps thou hast turned thine eyes upon another that thou mistrustest the virtue of the water?"

Then the wife laughed, wiped the tears from her cheeks, and kissed her husband so that the breath almost left him. But in the afternoon, when they sat on the stone bench before the house door and sang two-part songs about true love, the passers-by said: "The silly old people!" However, the happy ones heard them not.

So passed many years. The house had become too small for the children. They had gone forth, had married and had children of their own. The two old people were again alone, and were as dear to each other as on their wedding day; and every Sunday, when the church-bell rang, each drank a drop from the flask.

Then once again the day of the summer solstice drew near. On the evening before, Hans and Greta sat before their door and looked toward the heights where the St. John's fire blazed, and from the distance sounded the mirth of the young fellows and maids, who stirred the fire and sprang through its flames in couples.

Then the wife said: "Dear Hans, I would like to go once more to the forest. If thou desirest it also, then will we start early in the morning. But thou must waken me early, for when the elder blossoms the young women like to sleep until the sun is high in the heavens."

Hans agreed. On the next morning he wakened his wife, and they went together into the forest. They walked like lovers, and each gave a careful heed to the steps of the other.

When Hans cautiously jumped over the root of a tree, the wife said: "Ah, Hans, thou leapest indeed like a young kid!" and when Greta timidly stepped over a little ditch, her husband laughed and cried: "Tuck up your dress, Greta! Jump!" And then they selected an old pine tree, feasting in its shade on what Greta had brought with her.

"It was here," said Hans, "where the wood-sprite appeared to us that day, and there yonder must lie the

forest meadow with the fountain of youth. But I have never again found the meadow and the spring."

"And, God be thanked! that has mattered not," hastily interrupted Greta. "For our flask is still far from being empty."

"Certainly, certainly," nodded Hans. "But yet it would please me if we could see the good wood-sprite once again, and thank her for our good fortune. Come—let us go and seek her. Perhaps I will be as lucky to-day as formerly."

Then they set out and went deeper into the forest, and after a quarter of an hour saw there, before their eyes, the sunny forest meadow. Lilies and bluebells bloomed in the grass, gay-colored butterflies flew to and fro, and on the edge of the forest stood also the little house, just as in years before. They went toward the house with beating hearts, and best of all, there was indeed the fountain of youth at hand, and dragon-flies, in green and gold, hovered over it.

Hans and Greta stepped to the brim of the spring. They embraced each other and stooped over the water; and from out the clear surface of the spring there confronted them two gray heads with friendly, wrinkled faces.

Then hot tears fell from the eyes of the old couple, and they stood stammering and sobbing in mutual guilt. It required a long time before it became clear to them that each had deluded and for long years had lovingly deceived the other.

"Thou hast also known that we have both grown old?" cried out Hans, joyfully.

"Of course, of course," laughed the wife, amid tears.

"And I, also," rejoiced old Hans. Then he took his wife and kissed her as on the day she had said "Yes" to him.

Then the forest-sprite suddenly stood before them, as if she had sprung out of the earth.

"Welcome," said she. "You have not appeared before me for a long time. But—but," continued the little woman, and threatened with her finger, "you have kept a bad home with the water of youth. Wrinkles and gray hair! Ah, ah! Now," continued she again, "that is easy to remedy, and you are come at a good hour. Quick! Spring into the fountain of youth; it is not deep; dip your gray heads under; then you shall see a miracle. The bath will restore to you youthful vigor and beauty. But quick, before the sun sinks!"

Hans and Great looked at each other.

"Wilt thou?" asked the husband, in an uncertain voice.

"Never," answered Greta, quickly. "Oh, if thou only knowest how happy I am, that at last I may be old! And, also, it would be impossible on account of our children and grandchildren. No, gracious forest-sprite, a thousand thanks for your good deed, but we remain as we are. Is it not so, Hans?"

"Yes," nodded Hans, "we remain old. If thou couldst but know, Greta, how well your gray hair becomes you."

"As you will," said the wood-sprite, a little vexed.

"There is no ceremony here." So speaking, she went into the house and locked the door behind her.

But the old couple kissed each other anew. Then they stepped homeward, arm in arm, through the forest, and the midsummer sun shed a golden light upon their gray heads.

GOOD BLOOD

BY ERNST VON WILDENBRUCH



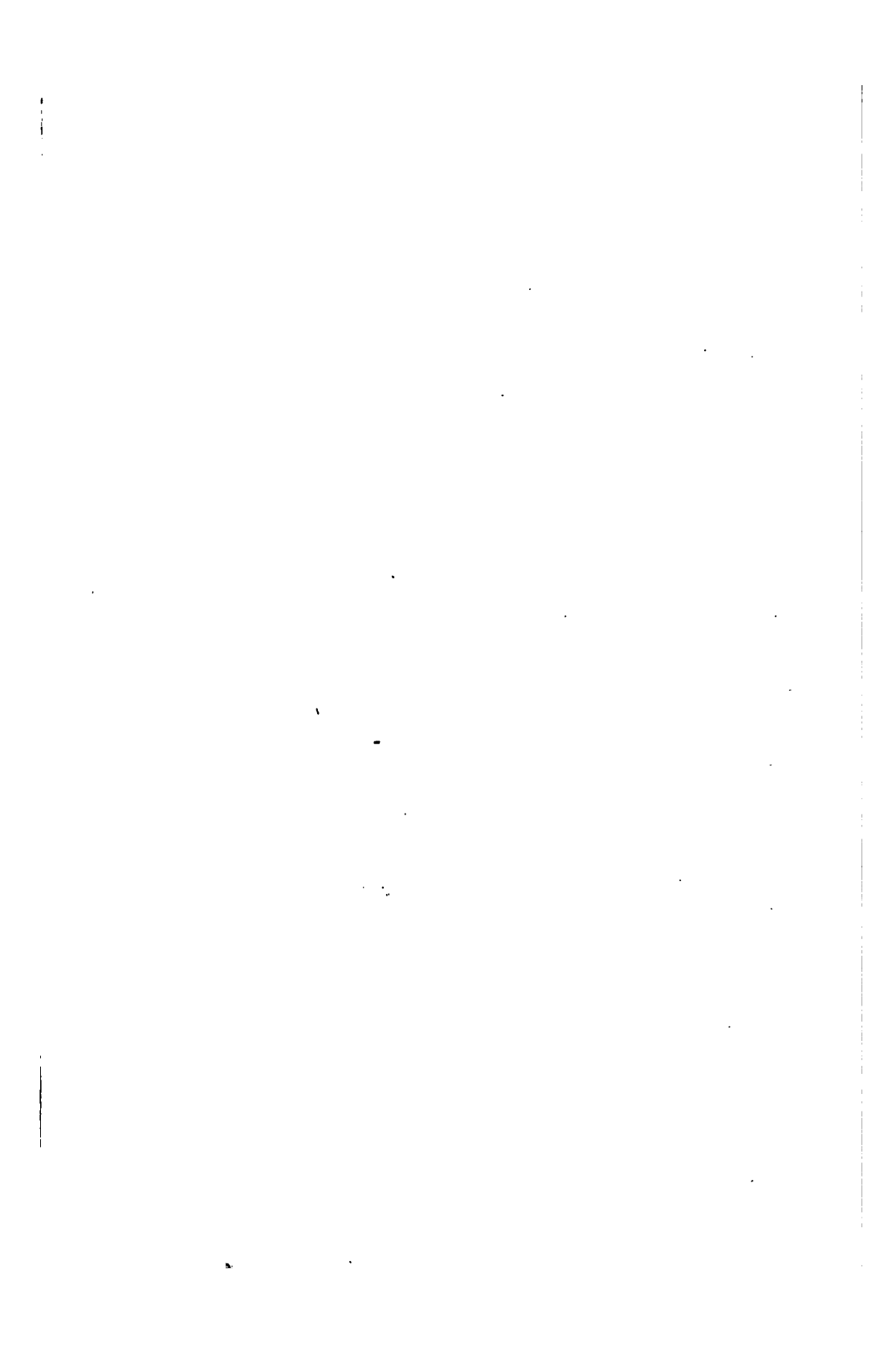
"Few stories of cadet or student life," says General Charles King, "have impressed me as did 'Das Edle Blut.'"

The author of "Good Blood" was born at Beirut, Syria, in 1845, his father having been Prussian Consul-General there. He entered the Prussian cadet corps and the Potsdam preparatory school, and after serving as officer during two wars, he resigned from the army in 1865, and studied law, became Referendar at the Frankfort-on-Oder Court of Appeals, Judge at Berlin, member of the Foreign Office of the German Empire, and Privy Councilor.

With his "heroic songs" he was the first to give epic treatment to the war with France. Through his series of historical plays for the people, he became enormously popular.

The more close and personal touch is found in his short stories, many of which, as in "Good Blood," deal with a superior character in rebellion against its surroundings. This little story, though new, is fast becoming a classic.





GOOD BLOOD

BY ERNST VON WILDENBRUCH

IS it possible that there are people quite free from curiosity? People who can pass on behind any one they see gazing earnestly and intently toward some unknown object without feeling an impulse to stop, to follow the direction of the other's eyes, to discover what odd thing he may be looking at?

For my part, if I were asked whether I counted myself among that class of cold natures, I do not know that I could honestly answer "Yes." At any rate, there was once a moment in my life when I was not only goaded by such an impulse, but when I actually yielded to the temptation and fell into the way of any mere curiosity seeker.

The place in which it happened was in a wine-room in the old town where as Referendar¹ I was practising at court; the time was an afternoon in summer.

The wine-room, situated on the ground floor of a house in the great square which from the window one could look out upon in every direction, was at this hour nearly empty. To me this was all the more agreeable, for I have ever been a lover of solitude.

There were three of us: the fat waiter, who from

¹ The title conferred in Prussia on the candidate who has passed the first of the two examinations held before appointment as judge.

Translated by R. W. Howes, 2d. Copyright, 1907, by F. F. Collier & Son.

a gray, dust-covered bottle was pouring out the golden-yellow Muscatel into my glass; then myself, who sat in a nook of the cozy, odd-cornered room and smacked the fragrant wine; and still another guest, who had taken his place at one of the two open windows, a tumbler of red wine lying before him on the windowsill, in his mouth a long brown, smoke-seasoned meerschäum cigar-holder, out of which he wrapped himself in a cloud of smoke.

This man, who had a long gray beard framing a ruddy face tinged bluish in places, was an old retired colonel, whom every one in town knew. He belonged to that colony of the Superannuated who had settled down in this pleasant place to wearily drag out the end of their days.

Toward noon they could be seen strolling deliberately in groups of twos or threes down the street, shortly to disappear into the wine-room, where between twelve and one they assembled at the round table to gossip. On the table stood pint bottles of sourish Moselle, over the table floated a thick mist of cigar smoke, and through the mist came voices, peevish, grating, discussing the latest event in the Army Register.

The old colonel, too, was a regular patron of the wine-room, but he never came at the hour of general assembly, but later, in the afternoon.

He was a man of lonely disposition. Rarely was he seen in the company of others; his lodging was in the suburbs on the other side of the river, and from the window of his room one could look out over a wide

stretch of meadow land which the river regularly inundated every spring, when it overflowed its banks. Many a time have I passed by his lodging and seen him standing at the window, his bloodshot eyes, rimmed with deep bags beneath, thoughtfully gazing out toward the gray waste of water beyond the embankment.

And now he sits there at the window of the wine-room and gazes out upon the square, over whose surface the wind sweeps along in a whirl of dust.

But what is he looking at, I wonder?

The fat waiter, bored to death over his two silent fees, had his attention already drawn toward the colonel's behavior; he stood in the middle of the room, his hands clasped behind the tail of his coat, and was gazing through the other window out on to the square.

Something must surely be going on there.

Quietly as possible, so as not to break the interest of the other two, I rose from my seat. But there was really nothing to be seen. The square was nearly empty; only in the centre, under the great street lamps, I noticed two schoolboys who were facing each other in threatening attitude. Could it be this, then, that so fixed the attention of the old colonel?

But having once begun, such is the nature of man, I could not withdraw my attention before knowing whether this threat of a fight would really swell to an outbreak. The boys had just come from afternoon school session; they were still carrying their portfolios under their arms. They may have been of equal age, but one was a head taller than the other. This bigger

one, a tall, lank, overgrown schoolboy, with an unpleasant look in his freckled face, was blocking the way of the other, who was short and plump and had an honest face with chubby, red cheeks. The bigger boy seemed to be nagging at the other with taunting words, but by reason of the distance it was impossible to understand what he said. After this had been going on for a while, the quarrel suddenly broke out. Both boys dropped their portfolios to the ground; the little chubby boy lowered his head, as though to ram his opponent in the stomach, and then rushed at him.

"The big fellow there will soon have him in a fix," now said the colonel, who was earnestly following the movements of the enemy, and who seemed not to approve the tactics of the little chubby boy.

For whom he intended these words it would be hard to say; he spoke them to himself without addressing any one of us.

His prediction was at once justified.

The big fellow dodged the onset of his enemy; the next moment he had his left arm squeezed around the other's neck, so that the head of the latter was caught as in a noose; he had him, as they say, "in chancery." With his right hand he gripped the right fist of his opponent, who was trying to pummel him with it on the back, and when he had regularly trapped him and brought him completely under his power he dragged him again and again round and about the lamp-post.

"Clumsy lad," muttered the old colonel, continuing his monologue, "always to let himself get caught in that way." He was plainly disappointed in the little

chubby boy, and could not endure the long, lanky one.

"They fight that way every day," he explained, noticing the waiter, to whom he seemed willing to account for his interest in the matter.

Then he turned his face again toward the window.

"Wonder if the little one will turn up!"

Scarcely had he mumbled this to the end when there came rushing from the city park that adjoined the square a slender little slip of a lad.

"There he is," said the old colonel. He swallowed a mouthful of red wine and stroked his beard.

The little fellow, who one felt sure by the resemblance must be a brother of little Chubby Cheeks, but a finer and improved edition, ran up, lifted high his portfolio with both hands and gave Long-Shanks a blow on the back that resounded away over to where we sat.

"Bravo!" said the old colonel.

Long-Shanks kicked like a horse at this new assailant. Little-Boy dodged, and the same instant Long-Shanks got a second blow, this time on the head, that sent his cap flying.

Nevertheless, he still kept his prisoner held in the trap and fast by the right hand.

Then Little-Boy tore open his portfolio with frantic haste; from the portfolio he drew out a pen-case, from the pen-case a pen-holder, which all at once he began jabbing into the hand of Long-Shanks that held his brother prisoner.

"Clever lad!" said the colonel to himself. "Fine lad!" His red eyes fairly gleamed with delight.

The affair was now becoming too hot for Long-Shanks. Stung with pain, he released his first opponent to throw himself with furious blows on Little-Boy.

But the latter was now transformed into a veritable little wild-cat. His hat had flown from his head, his curly hair clung round his fine, deathly pale face, out of which his eyes fairly burned; the portfolio with all its contents was lying on the ground—over cap, portfolio and all he went for the anatomy of Long-Shanks.

He threw himself on the enemy, and with little, clenched, convulsive fists belabored him so on stomach and body that Long-Shanks began to retreat step by step.

In the meanwhile Chubby-Cheeks had recovered himself, snatched up his portfolio, and with blow after blow on the sides and back of his oppressor, pushed into the fight again.

Long-Shanks at last threw off Little-Boy, took two steps backward and picked up his cap from the ground. The fight was drawing to a finish.

Panting and out of breath, the three stood looking at one another. Long-Shanks showed an ugly grin, behind which he tried to hide the shame of his defeat; Little-Boy, with fists still doubled, followed every one of his movements with blazing eyes, ready at a moment to spring once more upon the enemy should the latter renew the attack. But Long-Shanks did not advance again; he had had enough. Sneering and shrugging his shoulders, he kept drawing away farther and far-

ther until he had reached a safe distance, when he began to call out names.

The two brothers now collected the belongings of Little-Boy that lay scattered about, stuffed them into the portfolio, picked up their caps, whipped the dust from them, and turned homeward. On the way they passed the windows of our wine-room. I could now plainly see the brave little fellow; he was a thoroughbred, every inch of him. Long-Shanks was again approaching from behind and bawling after them through the length of the square. Little-Boy shrugged his shoulders with fine contempt. "You great, cowardly bully," said he, and stopping suddenly, turned right about and faced the enemy. At once Long-Shanks stopped too, and the two brothers broke out into derisive laughter.

They were now standing directly under the window at which the old colonel was sitting. He leaned out.

"Bravo, youngster!" said he, "you are a plucky one—here—drink this on the strength of it." He had taken up the tumbler and was holding it out of the window toward Little-Boy. The boy looked up, surprised, then whispered something to his older brother, gave him his portfolio to hold, and gripped the big glass in his two little hands.

When he had drunk all he wanted, with one hand he held the glass by its stem, with the other took back the portfolio from his brother, and without asking by your leave, handed the glass over to him.

Chubby-Cheeks then took a long swallow.

"The blessed boy," muttered the colonel to himself.

"I give him my glass, and without further ado he makes his *cher frère* drink out of it, too."

But by the face of Little-Boy, who now reached the glass up to the window again, one could see that he had only been doing something which seemed to him quite a matter of course.

"Do you like the bouquet?" asked the old colonel.

"Yes, thanks, very well," said the boy, who snatched at his cap politely, and went on his way with his brother.

The colonel looked after them until they had turned a corner of the street and disappeared from his sight.

"With boys like that"—then said the colonel, returning to his soliloquizing—"it is often an odd thing about boys like that."

"That they should fight so in the public streets!" said the fat waiter with disapproval, still standing at his post. "One wonders how the teacher can allow it; and they seem to belong to good family, too."

"It isn't that that does the harm," grunted the old colonel. "Young people must have their liberty, teachers can't always be keeping an eye on them. Boys all fight—must fight."

He rose heavily from his place so that the chair creaked beneath him, scraped the cigar butt out of its holder into the ash-tray, and walked stiffly over to the wall where his hat hung on a nail. At the same time he continued his reverie.

"In young blood like that nature will show itself—everything, just as it *really* is—afterward, when older,

things look all much alike—then one is able to study more carefully—*young blood* like that.”

The waiter had put his hat into his hand; the colonel took up his tumbler again, in which there were still a few drops of the red wine.

“God bless the youngsters,” he murmured; “they have hardly left me a drop.” He looked, almost sadly, into what remained of the wine, then set the tumbler down again without drinking.

The fat waiter became suddenly alive.

“Will the colonel, perhaps, have another glass?”

The old man, standing at the table, had opened the wine list and was mumbling to himself.

“H’m—another sort, maybe—but one can’t buy it by the glass—only by the bottle—somewhat too much.”

Slowly his gaze wandered over in my direction; I read in his eyes the dumb inquiry a man sometimes throws his neighbor when he wants to go halves with him over a bottle of wine.

“If the colonel will allow me,” I said, “it would give me great pleasure to drink a bottle with him.”

He agreed, plainly not unwilling. He pushed the wine list over to the waiter, lining with his finger the sort he wanted, and said in a commanding tone: “A bottle of that.”

“That is a brand I know well,” he said, turning to me, while he threw his hat on a chair and sat down at one of the tables—“it’s good blood.”

I had placed myself at a table with him so that I could see his face in profile. His look was again turned toward the window, and as he gazed past me

up into the heavens, the glow of the sunset was reflected in his eyes.

It was the first time I had seen him at such close quarters.

By the look of his eyes he was lost in dreams, and as his hand played mechanically through his long beard, there seemed to rise before him out of the flood of the years that had rushed behind, forms that were once young when he was young, and which were now—who can say where? The bottle which the waiter had brought and placed at a table before us contained a rare wine. An old Bordeaux, brown and oily, poured into our glasses. I recalled the expression which the old man had used a short time before.

"I must admit, colonel, that this is indeed 'good blood.' "

His flushed eyes came slowly back from the far away, turned upon me, and remained fixed there, as if he would say: "What do you know about it?"

He took a deep draft, wiped his beard, and gazed at his glass. "Strange," he said, "when a man grows old—he recalls the earliest days far easier than those that come later."

I was silent; I felt that I ought neither to speak nor question. When a man is lost in recollections he is making poetry, and one must not question a poet.

A long pause followed.

"What an assortment of people one has to meet with," he continued. "When one thinks of it—many who live on and on—it were often better they did not live at all—and others have to go so much too early."

He passed the palm of his hand over the surface of the table. "Beneath that lies much."

It seemed as if the table had become to him as the surface of the earth, and that he was thinking of those lying beneath the ground.

"Had to keep thinking of this a little while ago"—his voice sounded hollow—"when I saw that little fellow. With a boy like that nature comes right out, fairly gushes out—thick as your arm. You can see blood in it. Pity, though, that good blood flows so freely—more freely than the other. I once knew a little chap like that."

And there it was.

The waiter had seated himself in a back corner of the room; I kept perfectly quiet; the heavy voice of the old colonel went laboring through the stillness of the room like a gust of wind that precedes a storm or some serious outbreak in nature.

His eyes turned toward me as if to search me, whether I could bear to listen. He did not ask, I did not speak, but I looked at him, and my look eagerly replied: "Go on."

But not yet did he begin; first he drew from the breast pocket of his coat a large cigar-case of hard, brown leather, took out a cigar and slowly lighted it.

"You know Berlin, of course," said he, as he blew out the match and puffed the first cloud of smoke over the table. "No doubt you have traveled before this on the street railway—"

"Oh, yes; often."

"H'm—well, then, as you go along behind the new Friedrich Street from Alexander Square to the Jannowiz Bridge, there stands there on the right-hand side in new Friedrich Street, a great ugly old building; it is the old military school."

I nodded.

"The new one over there in Lichterfelde I do not know, but the old one, that I do know—yes—h'm—was even a cadet there in my time—yes—that one I do know."

This repetition of words gave me the feeling that he knew not only the house, but probably many an event that had taken place in it.

"As you come from Alexander Square," he continued, "there first comes a court with trees. Now grass grows in the court; in my time it was not so, for the drills took place there and the cadets went walking there during the hours of recreation. After that comes the great main building that encloses a square court, which is called the "Karreehof," and there, too, the cadets used to walk. Passing by from the outside, you can't see into the court."

I nodded again in confirmation.

"And then comes still a third court; it is smaller, and on it stands a house. Don't know what it is used for now; at that time it was the infirmary. You can still see there the roof of the gymnasium as you pass by; then next to the infirmary was the principal outdoor gymnasium. In it was a jumping ditch and a climbing apparatus and every other possible thing—now it has all gone. From the infirmary a door led

out into the gymnasium, but it was always kept locked. When one wanted to go into the infirmary, one had to cross the court and enter in front. The door then, as I said, was always locked; that is, it was opened only on some special occasion, and that, indeed, was always a very mournful occasion. For behind the door was the mortuary, and when a cadet died he was laid therein, and the door remained open until the other cadets had filed by, and looked at him once more—and he was then taken out—yes—h'm."

A long pause followed.

"Concerning the new house over there in Lichterfelde," continued the old colonel in a somewhat disparaging tone, "I know nothing, as I said, but have heard that it is become a big affair with a great number of cadets. Here in New Friedrich Street there were not so many, only four companies, and they divided themselves into two classes: Sekundaner and Primaner, and to these two were added the Selektaner, or special students, who afterward entered the army as officers, and who were nicknamed 'The Onions,'² because they had authority over the others and were barely tolerated in consequence.

"Now in the company to which I belonged—it was the fourth—there were two brothers who sat together in the same class with me, the Sekundaner. Their name is of no consequence—but—well, they were called, then, von *L*; the older of the two was called by the superiors *L* No. I, and the smaller, who was a year and a half younger than the other, *L* No. II.

²"Die Bollen," a term of dislike among the Berlin cadets.

'Among the cadets, however, they were called Big and Little L. Little L, indeed—h'm—'

He moved in his chair, his eyes gazed out into vacancy. It appeared that he had reached the subject of his reveries.

"Such a contrast between brothers I have never seen," he continued, blowing a thick cloud from his meerschaum pipe. "Big L was a strapping fellow, with clumsy arms and legs and a big fat head; Little L was like a willow switch, so slender and supple. He had a small, fine head, and light, wavy hair that curled of itself, and a delicate nose like a young eagle's, but above all—he was a lad—"

The old colonel drew a deep sigh. "Now you must not think that all this was a matter of indifference to the cadets; on the contrary. The brothers had scarcely entered the Berlin Cadet School from the preparatory school (they came from the one at Wahlstatt, I believe) when their status was at once fixed: Big L was neglected, and Little L was the universal favorite.

"Now with such boys it is an odd thing: the big and the strong, they are the leaders, and on whomsoever these bestow their favor, with that boy all goes well. It also procures for him respect from the others, and no one ventures lightly to attack him. Such boys—here again nature stands right out—much as it is with the animals, before the biggest and strongest all the rest must crouch."

Fresh, vigorous puffs from the meerschaum accompanied these words.

"When the cadets came down at recreation time

those who were good friends together met and would go walking arm in arm around the "Karreehof" and toward the court where the trees stood, and so it was always until the trumpet sounded for return to work.

"Big L—well—he attached himself just wherever he could find attachment, and stalked sullenly ahead by himself—Little L, on the contrary, almost before he could reach the court was seized under the arm by two or three big fellows and compelled to walk with them. And they were Primaners at that. For ordinarily, you must know, it never occurred to a Primaner to go with a "Knapsack," or Plebe, from the Sekunda; it was far beneath his dignity; but with Little L it was different, there an exception was made. And yet he was no less loved by the Sekundaner than by the Primaner. One could see that in class, where we Sekundaner boys, you know, were by ourselves. In class we were ranged according to alphabet, so that the two L's sat together very nearly in the centre.

"In their lessons they stood pretty nearly even. Big L had a good head for mathematics; in other things he was not of much account, but in mathematics he was, as you might say, a "shark," and Little L, who was not strong in mathematics, used to "crib" from his brother. In all other respects Little L was ahead of his older brother, and in fact one of the best in his class. And right here appeared the difference between the brothers; Big L kept his knowledge to himself, and never prompted; Little L, *he* prompted, he fairly shouted—yes, to be sure he did—"

A tender smile passed over the face of the old man.

"If any one on the front form was called upon and did not know the answer—Little L hissed right across all the forms what he ought to say: when it came the turn of the back benches little L spoke the answer half-aloud to himself.

"There was there an old professor from whom we took Latin. During nearly every lesson he would stop short in the middle of the class; 'L No. II,' he would say, 'you are prompting again! And that, too, in a most shameless fashion. Have a care, L No. II, next time I will make an example of you. I say it to you now for the last time!'"

The old colonel laughed to himself. "But it always remained the next to last time, and the example was never made. For though Little L was no model boy, more often quite the contrary, he was loved by both teachers and officers as well—but how indeed could it have been otherwise? He was always in high spirits, as if receiving a new present every day, yet nothing ever got sent to him, for the father of the two was in desperately poor circumstances, a major in some infantry regiment or other, and the boys received hardly a groschen (24 cents) for pocket money. And always as if just peeled out of the egg, so fresh—without and within—eh, eh, altogether—"

Here the colonel paused, as if searching for an expression that would contain the whole of his love for this former little comrade.

"As if Nature had been for once in a proudly good-humor," he said, "and had stood that little fellow upright on his feet and cried: 'There you have him!'"

"Now this was to be observed," he continued, "that just so much as the brothers differed, one from the other, the more they seemed to cling to each other. In Big L, indeed, one did not notice it so much; he was always sullen and displayed no feeling; but Little L could never conceal anything. And because Little L felt conscious of this, how much better he himself was treated by the other cadets, it made him sorry for his brother. When we took our walks around the courtyard, then one could see how Little L would look at his brother from time to time, to see if he, too, had some one to walk with. That he prompted his brother in class and allowed him to copy from himself when sight-exercises were dictated was all a matter of course; but he also took care that no one teased his brother, and when he observed him quietly from the side, as he often did, without drawing his brother's attention to it, then his little face was quite noticeably sad, almost as if he were a great care to him—"

The old man pulled hard at his pipe. "All that I put together for myself afterward," said he, "when everything happened that was to happen; he knew at the time much better than we did how matters stood with Big L, and what was his brother's character.

"This was, of course, understood among the cadets, and it helped Big L none the more, for he remained disliked after it as before, yet it made Little L all the more popular, and he was generally called 'Brother Love.'

"Now the two lived together in one room, and Little L, as I said, was very clean and neat; the big one, on the contrary, was very slovenly. And so Little L fairly

made himself servant to his brother, and it turned out that he even cleaned the brass buttons on his uniform for him, and just before the ranks formed for roll-call would place himself, with clothes-brush in hand, in front of his brother, and once more regularly brush and scrub him—especially on those days when the ‘cross lieutenant’ was on duty and received roll-call.

“Well, in the morning the cadets had to go down into the court for roll-call, and there the officer on duty went up and down between the lines and inspected their uniforms to see if they were in order.

“And when the ‘cross lieutenant’ attended to this, then there reigned the most woful anxiety throughout the company, for he always found something. He would go behind the cadets and flip at their coats with his finger to make the dust fly, and if none came, then he would lift their coat-pockets and snap at them, and so, beat our coats as much as we would, there was sure to be left some dust lying on them, and as soon as the ‘cross lieutenant’ saw it, he would sing out in a voice like that of an old bleating ram: ‘Write him down for Sunday report,’ and then Sunday’s day off might go to the devil, and then that got to be a very serious matter.”

The old colonel paused, took a vigorous swallow of wine, and with the palm of his hand squeezed the beard from his upper lip into his mouth and sucked off the wine drops that sparkled on the hair. Recollection of the “cross lieutenant” made him plainly furious.

“When one considers what sort of meanness it takes

to so deprive a poor little fellow of the Sunday holiday he has been hugging for a whole week, and all for a trifle—bah! it's downright—whenever I have seen any one annoying my men—in later days that sort of thing didn't happen in my regiment; they knew this, that I was there and would not tolerate it.—To be rough at times, ay, even to the extreme if necessary, to throw one into the guard-house, that does no harm—but to nag—for that it takes a mean skunk!”

“Very true!” observed the waiter from the back part of the room, and thus made it known that he was following the colonel's story.

The old man calmed himself and went on with his story.

“Things went on this way for a year, and then came the time for examinations, always a very special occasion.

“The Primaners took their ensign's examination, and the Selektaners, who, as I have said, were called ‘Onions,’ the officer's examination, and as fast as any had passed the examination, they were dismissed from the cadet corps and sent home, and it came about that the second classmen, or Sekundaner, who were to be promoted to first class, still remained Sekundaner for a time.

“Well, this state of affairs lasted until the new Sekundaner entered from the preparatory school and the newly dubbed ‘Onions’ returned, and then once more the wheelbarrow trudged along its accustomed way. But in the mean time a kind of disorder prevailed, more especially just after the last of the Primaners

had left—they were examined in sections, you know, and then despatched, after which everything went pretty much at sixes and sevens.

“There was now in the dormitory where the two brothers lived a certain Primaner, a ‘swell,’ as he was called by the cadets, and because he had made up his mind, as soon as he should pass the examination and breathe the fresh air again, to conduct himself like a fine gentleman, he had had made for himself, instead of a sword-belt like those the cadets procured from the institution and wore, a special patent-leather belt of his own, thinner and apparently finer than the ordinary regulation belt. He was able to afford this much, you see, for he had money sent to him from home.

He had displayed this belt about everywhere, for he was inordinately proud of it, and the other cadets admired it.

“Now as the day arrived for the Primaner to pack together his scattered belongings in order to go home, he looked to buckle on his fine belt—and all at once the thing was missing.

“A great to-do followed; search was made everywhere; the belt was not to be found. The Primaner had not locked it in his wardrobe, but had put it with his helmet in the dormitory behind the curtain where the helmets of the other cadets lay openly—and from there it had disappeared.

“It could not possibly have disappeared in any other way—some one must have taken it.

“But who?

“First they thought of the old servant who was

accustomed to blacken the boots of the cadets, and keep the dormitory in order—but he was an old trusty non-commissioned officer, who had never during the course of his long life allowed himself to be guilty of the least irregularity.

“It surely could not be one of the cadets? But who could possibly think such a thing? So the matter remained a mystery, and truly an unpleasant one. The Primerer swore and scolded because he must now leave wearing the ordinary institution belt; the other cadets in the room were altogether silent and depressed; they had at once unlocked all their wardrobes and offered to let the Primerer search them, but he had merely replied: ‘That’s nonsense, of course; who could think of such a thing?’

“And now something remarkable happened, and caused more sensation than all that went before; all at once the Primerer got back the belt.

“He had just left his room with his portmanteau in his hand, and had reached the stairs, when he was hastily called from behind, and as he turned about, Little L came running up, holding something in his hand—it was the Primerer’s belt.

Two others happened to be passing at the time, and they afterward told how deathly pale Little L was, and how every member of his body was literally shaking. He had whispered something into the ear of the Primerer, and the two had exchanged all quietly a couple of words, and then the Primerer affectionately stroked the other’s head, took off his regulation belt, buckled on the fine one and was gone; he had handed the regu-

lation belt over to Little L to carry back. Naturally the story could now no longer be concealed, and it all came out accordingly.

"A new assignment of rooms was ordered; Big L was transferred; and just at the time all this was taking place, he had completed his removal to the new quarters.

"Afterward it occurred to the cadets that he had kept strangely quiet about the whole affair—but one always hears the grass growing after it has grown. So much, however, was certain; he had allowed no one to help him, and when Little L put his hands to the work, he became quite rough toward his little brother. But Little L, ready to help as he always was, did not allow himself to be deterred by this, and as he was taking out of his brother's locker the gymnasium drill jacket that was lying neatly folded together, he felt all at once something hard within—and it was the belt of the Primaner.

"What the brothers said to each other at the moment, or whether they spoke at all, no one has ever learned; for Little L had still so much presence of mind that he went noiselessly from the room. But hardly was he out of the door and in the corridor, when he threw the jacket on the ground, and without once thinking of what might be made out of the affair, he ran up behind the Primaner with the belt.

"But now, of course, it could no longer be helped; in five minutes the story was the property of the whole company.

"Big L had allowed himself to be driven by the

devil and had become light-fingered. Half an hour later it was whispered softly from room to room: 'To-night, when the lamps are turned out, general consultation in the company hall!'

"In every company quarters, you must know, there was a larger room, where marks were given out, and certain public actions proceeded with, in what was called the company hall.

"So that evening, when the lamps were out, and everything was quite dark, there was a general movement from all the rooms, through the corridor; not a door ventured to slam, all were in stocking feet, for the captain and the officers still knew nothing and were allowed to know nothing of the meeting, else we would have brought a storm about our ears.

"As we came to the door of the company hall, there stood near the door against the wall one as white as the plaster on the wall—it was Little L. At the same moment a couple took him by the hands. 'Little L can come in with us,' they said; 'he is not to blame.' Only one of them all wished to oppose this; he was a long, big fellow—he was called—name of no consequence—well, then, he was called K. But he was overruled at once; Little L was taken in with us, a couple of tallow candles were lit and placed on the table, and now the consultation began."

The colonel's glass was empty again. I filled it for him, and he took a long swallow. "Over all this," he went on, "one can laugh now if one wills; but this much I can say, for us we were not in a laughing mood, but altogether dismal. A cadet a rascal—to us

that was something incomprehensible. All faces were pale, all speaking was but half aloud. Ordinarily it was considered the most despicable piece of meanness if one cadet reported another to the authorities—but when a cadet had done such a thing as to steal, then he was for us no longer a cadet, and it was for this reason that the consultation was being held, whether we ought to report to the captain what Big L had done.

“Long K was the first to speak. He declared that we ought to go at once to the captain and tell him everything, for at such meanness all consideration ceases. Now long K was the biggest and strongest boy in the company; his words, therefore, made a marked impression, and besides, we were all of his opinion at bottom.

“No one knew anything to object to this, and so there fell a general silence. All at once, however, the circle that had formed around the table opened and Little L., who had till now been flattening himself against the farthest corner of the room, came forward into the centre. His arms hung limp at the side of his body, and his face he kept lowered to the ground; one saw that he wished to say something, but could not find the courage.

“Long K was again laying down the law. ‘L No. II,’ said he, ‘has no right to speak here.’

“But this time he was not so fortunate. He had always been hostile to the two, no one quite knew why, especially Little L. Moreover, he was not a bit popular, for as such youngsters have once and for all a tremendously fine instinct, they may have felt that in



Ernst v. Wildenbruch

Ernst von Wildenbruch





this long gawk lay hidden a perfectly mean, cowardly, wretched spirit. He was one of those who never venture to attack their equals in size, but bully the smaller and weaker ones.

"At that broke out a whispering on all sides: "Little L *shall* speak! All the more reason for him to speak."

"As the little fellow, who was still standing there, ever motionless and rigid, heard how his comrades were taking his part, suddenly the big tears rolled down his cheeks; he doubled his two little fists and screwed them into his eyes and sobbed so heart-breakingly that his whole body shook from top to bottom and he could not utter a word.

"One of them went up to him and patted him on the back.

"Take it easy,' said he; 'what is it you wish to say?'

"Little L still kept on sobbing.

"If—he is shown up—he then broke out at long intervals—'he will be dismissed from the corps—and then what will become of him?'

"There was silence everywhere; we knew that the young one was perfectly right, and that such would be the consequence if we reported him. Added to this we also knew that the father was poor, and involuntarily each thought of what his own father would say if he should learn the same of his son.

"But you must see yourself,' continued the cadet to Little L, "that your brother has done a very contemptible thing and deserves punishment for it."

"Little L nodded silently; his feelings were entirely

with those who were censuring his brother. The cadet reflected a moment, then he turned to the others.

"‘I make a proposition,’ said he; ‘and if it be accepted we will not disgrace L No I for life. We will prove on his body whether he has any honorable feelings left. L No. I himself shall choose whether he wishes us to report him or whether we shall keep the matter to ourselves, cudgel him thoroughly for it, and then let the affair be buried.’

"That was an admirable way out. All agreed eagerly.

"The cadet laid his hand on Little L’s shoulder. ‘Go along, then,’ said he, ‘and call your brother here.’

"Little L dried his tears and nodded his head quickly—then he was out of the door and a moment after was back again, bringing his brother with him.

"Big L ventured to look at no one; like an ox that has been felled on the forehead, he stood before his comrades. Little L stood behind him, and never once did his eyes leave his brother’s slightest movement.

"The cadet who had made the foregoing proposition began the trial of L No. I.

"‘Does he admit that he took the belt?’

"‘He admits it.’

"‘Does he feel that he has done something that has made him absolutely unworthy of being a cadet any longer?’

"‘He feels it.’

"‘Does he choose that we report him to the captain or that we thrash him soundly and that the matter shall then be buried?’

"'He prefers to be soundly thrashed.'

"A sigh of relief went through the whole hall.

"It was determined to finish the matter at once then and there.

"One of the boys was sent out to fetch a rattan, such as we used for beating our clothes.

"While he was gone we tried to induce Little L to leave the hall, so that he should not be present at the execution.

"But he shook his head silently; he wished to remain on hand.

"As soon as the rattan came, Big L was made to lie face down on the table, two cadets seized his hands and drew him forward, two others took him by the feet so that his body lay stretched out lengthwise. The tallow candles were taken from the table and lifted up high, and the whole affair had an absolutely gruesome look.

"Long K, because he was the strongest, was to perform the execution; he took the rattan in his hand, stepped to one side, and with the force of his whole body let the cane come whistling down on to Big L, who was clothed only in drill jacket and trousers.

"The young fellow fairly rose under the fearful blow and would have cried out; but in a second Little L rushed up to him, took his head in both hands and smothered it against himself.

"'Don't scream,' he whispered to him; 'don't scream, else the whole affair will get out!'

"Big L swallowed down the cry and choked and groaned to himself.

"Long K again lifted up the cane, and a second swish resounded through the hall.

"The body of the culprit actually writhed on the table, so that the cadets were scarcely able to hold him down by his hands and feet. Little L had wrapped both arms around the head of his brother, and was crushing it with convulsive force against himself. His eyes were wide open, his face like the plaster on the wall, his whole body was quivering.

"Throughout the hall was a stillness like death, so that one could only hear the wheezing and puffing of the victim whom the little brother was smothering against his breast. All eyes were hanging on the little fellow; we all had a feeling that we could not look on at it any longer.

"When, therefore, the third blow had fallen and the whole performance repeated itself just as before, a general excited whisper followed: 'Now, it is enough—strike no more!'

"Long K, who had become quite red from the exertion, was raising his arm again for the fourth blow, but with one accord, three or four threw themselves between him and Big L, tore the rattan from his grasp, and thrust him back.

"The execution was at an end.

"The cadet aforesaid raised his voice once more, but only half aloud.

" 'Now, the affair is over with and buried,' said he, 'let each one give his hand to L No. I, and let him that breathes even a word of the matter be accounted a rascal.'

"A general 'Yes, yes,' showed that he had spoken entirely in accord with the mind of the others. They stepped up to Big L and stretched out their hands to him, but then, as at a word of command, they threw themselves upon Little L. There formed a regular knot about the lad, first one and then another wished to grasp him by the hand and shake it. Those standing at the back stretched out their hands 'way across those in front, some even climbed on to the table to get at him; they stroked his head, patted him on the shoulder, and with it all was a general whispering: 'Little L, you glorious rascal, you superb Little L.'"

The old colonel lifted his glass to his mouth—it was as if he were forcing something down behind it. When he set it down again, he drew a deep sigh from the bottom of his heart.

"Boys like that," said he, "they have instinct—instinct and sentiment.

"The lights were turned out, all stole hushed through the corridor back to their rooms. Five minutes later every boy was lying in his bed, and the affair was ended.

"The captain and the other officers had heard not a sound of the whole matter.

"The affair was ended"—the voice of the speaker grew thick; he had buried both hands in his trousers' pockets and was gazing before him through the fumes of the smoking cigar.

"So we thought that night, as we lay in bed.—Did Little L sleep that night? In the days following, when we assembled in class, it did not seem so. Before, it

had been as if an imp were sitting in the place where the lad sat, and, like a rooster, had crowed it over the whole class—now it was as if there were a void in the place—so still and pale he sat in his place.

"As when a man flicks the dust from the wings of a butterfly—so was it with the little lad—I can not describe it otherwise.

"On afternoons one always saw him now walking with his brother. He may have felt that Big L would now find less companionship than ever among the others—so he provided company for him. And there the two went, then, arm in arm, always around about the Karreehof and across the court with the trees in it, one as well as the other with head bent to the ground, so that one scarcely saw that they ever spoke a word."

Again there came a pause in the narrative, again I had to fill the empty glass of the colonel, who smoked his cigar faster and faster.

"But all this," he continued, "would perhaps have worn itself out in course of time and everything have gone on as before—but for people!"

He laid his clenched fist on the table.

"There are people," said he, scowling, "who are like the poisonous weed in the field, at which beasts nibble themselves to death. With such people the rest poison themselves!

"So then, one day we were having lessons in physics. The teacher was showing us experiments on the electric machine, and an electric shock was to be passed through the whole class.

"To this end each one of us had to give his hand to his neighbor, so as to complete the circuit.

"As now Big L, who was sitting next to Long K, held out his hand to him, the lubber made a grimace as if he were about to touch a toad and drew back his hand.

"Big L quietly shrank into himself and sat there as if covered with shame. But at the same instant Little L is up and out of his place, over to his brother's side, at whose place, next to Long K, he seats himself, whose hand he grips and smashes with all the force of his body against the wooden form, so that the long gawk cries out with pain.

"Then he grabbed Little L by the neck and the two now began regularly to fight in the middle of class.

"The teacher, who had been tinkering all this time at his machine, now rushed up with coat-tails flying.

"'Now! Now! Now!' he cried.

"He was, you must know, an old man for whom we had not exactly a great respect.

"The two were so interlocked that they did not break away, even though the professor was standing directly in front of them.

"'What disgraceful conduct!' cried the professor. 'What disgraceful conduct! Will you separate at once!'

"Long K made a face as if he were about to cry.

"'L No. II began it,' he said, 'though I did nothing at all to provoke him.'

"Little L stood straight up in his place—for we always had to stand when a professor spoke to us—big drops of perspiration coursed slowly down either cheek; he said not a word; he had bitten his teeth together so hard that one could see the muscles of his jaw through the thin cheeks. And as he heard what Long K said a smile passed over his face—I have never seen anything like it.

"The old professor expatiated at some length in beautiful set phrases over such disgraceful behavior, spoke of the 'utter depths of abysmal bestiality' which such conduct betrayed—we let him talk on; our thoughts were with Little L and Long K.

"And scarcely was the lesson at an end and the professor out of the door, when from the back a book came flying through the air the whole length of the class straight at the skull of Long K. And as he turned angrily toward the aggressor, from the other side he received another book on his head, and now there broke out a general howling: 'Knock him down! Knock him down!' The whole class sprang up over tables and benches and there was a rush for Long K, whose hide was now so thoroughly tanned that it fairly smoked."

The old colonel, pleased, smiled grimly to himself and contemplated his hand as it still lay with fist doubled on the table.

"I helped," said he, "and with hearty good-will—I can tell you."

It was as if his hand had forgotten that it had grown fifty years older; as the fingers closed convulsively

one could see that it was in spirit once again pummeling Long K.

"But as people must belong once and forever to their own kind," he continued his narrative, "so this Long K had to be naturally a revengeful, spiteful malicious *canaille*. He would much rather have gone to the captain and resentfully told him everything, but in our presence he did not dare; for that he was too cowardly.

"But that he had received a thrashing before the whole class, and that Little L was to blame for it, for that he did not forgive Little L.

"One afternoon, then, as recreation hour came round again, the cadets went walking in the courts; the two brothers, as usual, by themselves; Long K linked arm in arm with two others.

"To get from the Karreehof to the other court where the trees were, one had to pass under one of the wings of the main building, and it was a rule that the cadets must not pass through arm in arm, so as not to obstruct the passageway.

"On this particular afternoon, as ill-luck would have it, Long K, as he was about to pass through with his two chums from the Karreehof to the other court, met the two brothers at the corridor, and they, deep in their thoughts, had forgotten to let go of one another.

"Long K, although the affair was no concern of his, when he saw this stood still, opened his eyes wide and his mouth still wider, and called out to the two: 'What does this mean,' said he, 'that you go through

here arm in arm? Do you intend to block the way for honest people, you set of thieves?"

Here the colonel interrupted himself.

"That is now fifty years ago," said he, "and more—but I remember it as if it had happened yesterday.

"I was just going with two others from the Karreehof, and suddenly we heard a scream come from the corridor—I can not describe at all how it sounded—when a tiger or other wild beast breaks loose from his cage and throws himself on some one, then, I think, one would hear something like it.

"It was so horrible that we three let our arms drop and stood there quite paralyzed. And not only we, but everything in the Karreehof stopped and suddenly grew quiet. And then everything that had two legs to run with kept rushing up at full speed toward the corridor, so that it fairly swarmed and thickened black around the corridor. I, naturally, with the rest—and what I saw there—

"Little L had climbed on to Long K like a wildcat—nothing else—and with his left hand hanging on by the latter's collar so that the tall gawk was half-choked, with his right fist he kept up a crack—crack—and crack right in the middle of Long K's face, wherever it happened to strike, so that the blood was pouring from Long K's nose like a waterfall.

"Now from the other court came the officer who was on duty and broke his way through the cadets. 'L No. II, will you leave off at once!' he thundered—for he was a man tall as a tree and had a voice that

could be heard from one end of the Academy to the other, and we had a wholesome respect for him.

"But Little L neither heard nor saw, but kept on belaboring Long K in the face still more, and with it came again and again that fearful uncanny shriek that thrilled through us all, marrow and bone.

"When the officer saw that he took hold himself, gripped the little fellow by both shoulders, and by main force tore him away from Long K.

"As soon as he stood upon his feet, however, Little L rolled up the whites of his eyes, fell his full length to the earth, and writhed on the ground in a convulsion.

"We had never yet seen anything like it, and were shocked and stared at it in absolute terror.

"But the officer, who had been bending down over him, now straightened himself: 'The lad certainly has a most serious convulsion,' said he. 'Forward, two take hold of his feet'—he himself lifted him under the arms—'over to the infirmary!'

"And so they bore Little L over to the infirmary.

"While they were carrying him there we went up to Big L to learn just what had happened, and from Big L and the other two who had been with Long K we then heard the whole story.

"Long K was standing there like a whipped dog and wiping the blood from his nose, and had it not been for this nothing would have saved him from receiving another murderous thrashing. But now all turned silently away from him, no one ever spoke another word to him; he made himself a social outcast."

The top of the table resounded as the old colonel struck it with his fist.

"How long the others kept him in Coventry," said he, "I know not. I sat in class with him for a whole year longer and spoke never a single word more to him. We entered the army at the same time as ensigns; I did not give him my hand at parting; do not know whether he has become an officer; have never looked for his name in the army register; don't know whether he has fallen in one of the wars, whether he still lives or is dead—for me he was no more, is no more—the only thing I regret is that the person ever came into my life at all and that I can not root out the remembrance of him forever, like a weed one flings into the oven!

"The next morning came bad news from the infirmary: Little L was lying unconscious in a burning, nervous fever. In the afternoon his older brother was called in, but the little fellow no longer recognized him.

"And in the evening, as we all sat at supper in the big common dining-hall, a rumor came—like a great black bird with muffled beat of wings it passed through the hall—that Little L was dead.

"As we came back from the dining-hall into company quarters, our captain was standing at the door of the company hall; we were made to go in, and there the captain announced to us that our little comrade, L No. II, had fallen asleep that night, never to wake again.

"The captain was a very good man—he fell in 1866,

a brave hero—he loved his cadets, and as he gave us the news, he had to wipe the tears from his beard. Then he ordered us all to fold our hands; one of us had to step forward and before all say ‘Our Father’ out loud—”

The colonel bowed his head.

“Then for the first time,” said he, “I felt how really beautiful is the Lord’s Prayer.

“And so, the next afternoon, the door that led from the infirmary to the outdoor gymnasium opened, the hateful, ominous door.

“We were made to step down into the court of the infirmary; we were to see once more our dead comrade.

“Our steps shuffled with a dull and heavy sound as we were marched over there; no one spoke a word; one heard only a heavy breathing.

“And there lay little L, poor little L!

“In his white little shirt he lay there, his hands folded on his breast, his golden locks curled about his forehead, which was white like wax; the cheeks so sunken that the beautiful, delicate little nose projected quite far—and in his face—the expression—”

The old colonel was silent, the breath came choking from his bosom.

“I have grown to be an old man,” he went on falteringly—“I have seen men lying on the field of battle—men on whose faces stood written distress and despair—such heart sorrow as I saw in the face of this child I have never seen before or since—never—never—”

A deep stillness took possession of the wine-room where we were sitting. As the old colonel became

silent and spoke no word more, the waiter rose softly from his corner and lit the gas-jet that hung over our heads; it had grown quite dark.

I took up the wine bottle once more, but it was now almost empty—just one tear still crept slowly out—one last drop of the good blood.

DELIVERANCE

BY MAX SIMON NORDAU



The fame of "Degeneration," that vigorous polemic against abnormal vice, has so overshadowed Max Nordau's other literary accomplishments that it will be a surprise to many American readers to see his name among the master foreign writers of short stories. "Degeneration" has only an ethical value and does not rank by any means with the author's best literary work, for he has written, besides short stories of great merit, novels, essays, satires, critiques—all more or less bold attacks on existing conventionalities.

Nordau was born a Jew at Buda-Pesth. For a while he was a teacher, then he studied medicine, and after six years of travel returned and practised his profession of medicine, first at Buda-Pesth and afterward at Paris, where he settled, and is now a prominent leader in the Zionist movement in Europe.





DELIVERANCE

BY MAX NORDAU

FOR an hour the first regiment of Dragoons of the Guard had been drawn up on level ground behind a screen of low bushes, waiting the order to engage. For some time the fighting appeared to have ceased around them. Only a shattered gun carriage and the ground, pierced with deep holes like newly dug graves, heaped about with soft, yellowish earth, gave the spot the look of a battlefield. But the conflict was evident enough to the ear. On all sides thundered the cannon, and from the right came also the rattling of musketry. The roar of battle rose and fell like the gamut of a great orchestra executing the "Storm Movement" of the Pastoral Symphony.

In the foreground, on a slight elevation, a group of officers were attentively examining the French position. One of them, a Major, stood a little apart smoking a cigarette and gazing dreamily into the distance. He might not, perhaps, have attracted a feminine observer, but a masculine eye would certainly have marked him as a man of striking intellect. He was about thirty, tall, slight, with cold gray eyes, a pale, thin face and pale, sarcastic lips, just shadowed by a delicate auburn mustache. This silent, self-contained

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man had about him an air of strange listlessness and disenchantment that made him in every way a contrast to the tanned, sunburnt young fellows who stood about him, all on fire with the eagerness of battle. Taking off his helmet, he passed his hand over his forehead. It was an aristocratic, well-kept hand, with slender, bloodless fingers. The whole appearance of this officer—which even a uniform could not disguise—was that of a person of exceptional distinction, and indeed he was a person of very great distinction, being no other than Prince Louis von Hockstein Falckenbourg Gerau, the head of what was once a family of reigning princes.

Early left an orphan, the Prince found himself when he came of age master of an almost unlimited fortune. From his mother, a musician of exquisite sensibility, he had inherited an artistic temperament and keen sense of the beautiful; while from his father, a haughty and somewhat eccentric noble, he had received a disposition of such violence and independence that it brooked no control from outside and recognized no law but its own will.

It will take no great effort of the imagination to see how the world had treated the young prince. The Court distinguished him with special attentions; the ladies petted him; the men sought him. In this hot-house atmosphere of high life he came quickly to maturity, and, like most children brought up among older persons without companions of their own age, he was of a thoughtful, even suspicious, temperament. As, in addition to this, he looked at everything from a critical, almost skeptical, point of view, insisting on

getting to the bottom of every question, he did not make the mistake of most young men in his position—the mistake of thinking the attentions paid him homage to his own talent. Perfectly frank with himself, he recognized that they were paid to his title and fortune.

“What do these people really know of me?” he often asked himself, on coming home from some Court festival to the solitude of his magnificent palace.

“Nothing, and yet they scarcely wait for my mouth to open to applaud my speech! But if all the words I spoke this evening were written down and submitted to a man of sense, his honest verdict would have to be: ‘Well, perhaps this fellow isn’t exactly a fool, but he certainly is mighty little over mediocrity.’ Yet the world persists in treating me as if I were somebody! But it is not *me*—Louis—that they are really concerned with, but only Prince von Hockstein,” etc.

Louis was actually jealous of *the Prince*. The latter seemed to him an enemy, bent on thwarting and overshadowing his real self, and the noble ambition awoke in him to amount to something, in himself, apart from his rank and fortune.

But this was easier said than done; everywhere the Prince von Hockstein, etc., barred the way for Louis and would not let him pass. He enrolled himself at the University—the most aristocratic set among the students hastened to pay him court. The professors even, men whose genius until then he had revered, were overcome with joy when he appeared in their classrooms, and addressed their words markedly to him.

He soon had enough of this, and tried the army. His colonel thanked him for the honor he did the regiment in joining it; his superiors paid him flattering attentions; his fellow officers bored him. Then, too, the pettiness of garrison life was not much to his taste, so he quitted active service, but not until he had been rapidly promoted to the rank of major.

Of course, all this time women had played some part in his life. There were a few trifling affairs with actresses that did not go deep, and some passing flirtations with women of the world. These last he quickly found unbearable, for—except in being a thousand times more exacting—the great ladies amounted to no more than did the ballet girls.

One experience, however, came near being serious. The Prince, traveling incognito through the Black Forest to the watering-place of Norderney, chanced to take a place in the coupé of the diligence next to a lady also going to Norderney. She was of striking beauty and fascination, and the Prince was completely bewitched. He exerted himself immensely, but his attentions were all received with courteous indifference. Perhaps it was this indifference—a new experience—that charmed him. After he reached Norderney he continued to pay his court. He kept his incognito and simply called himself Herr von Gerau.

The lady was surrounded by a crowd of admirers, and accepted Louis's daily bouquets just as she did those of the others. She treated all her admirers with indifference, possibly to the Prince her manner was a shade colder than to the rest. At this critical mo-

ment, a certain great personage, an acquaintance of Louis, arrived at Norderney, and etiquette required the Prince to pay him a visit of ceremony in full dress uniform. Of course his name and rank could no longer be concealed. The fair lady beheld her admirer in his magnificent blue uniform, and learned who he really was. Immediately she had eyes for no one else, and seemed by smiles and glances to give him every encouragement and to ask pardon for her former neglect.

By way of answer, the Prince sent her a package containing his uniform and jeweled pin in the shape of a crown. These were accompanied by a note in which he declared he gave her in perpetuity and in sole proprietorship the only things she had cared for in him.

He was on the point of starting to hunt reindeer in Norway when the war of 1870 broke out. He immediately asked leave to join his regiment, and the request, of course, was at once granted. Patriotism and enthusiasm had very little to do with his action. He rejoined his regiment in the first place because it was the correct thing to do, and in the second because he hoped that war might possibly give him some new sensations. Was he again disappointed? He was inclined to think so. Now for two weeks he had been in the enemy's country, and he had had no extraordinary experience. When you have two good servants and unlimited money, even in a campaign there are few hardships, especially in a victorious army. As for heroic deeds, there had simply been no occasion for them. And the old weariness had come upon him

again, as he stood in front of his regiment, smoking his cigarette.

The French artillery was now advancing upon the ditch, and their balls struck the German batteries that it defended, making great havoc. Two regiments of infantry were ordered to the support of the batteries.

Marching first came the Third Westphalians. They passed so near the group of officers that Prince Louis could distinguish each face, each expression. The poor fellows had been marching for fourteen hours under the burning August sun. They were covered with dust and sweat and their uniforms were soiled with mud. But in no way did these heroes betray their deadly fatigue. Their eyes, reddened by the heat, flamed with the enthusiasm of war, their dry throats found strength to shout "Hurrah!" The whole regiment forgot their fatigue, and seemed, as they marched under fire, like men refreshed and stimulated by a generous draft.

"Poor devils," thought the Prince, "they are running to death as if it were a kermess dance. What are they thinking about?—nothing, probably. They are driven on by a blind desire of conquest. What good will victory do them? How will it better their lot—if they have the luck to escape death? Glory for Germany? Perhaps for me that might be worth something, hardly for them. Victory might add to the splendor of my uniform. Still, I don't know, I wear it so seldom. Perhaps if I go to Japan next year, the Mikado will receive me better if I belong to a victorious nation, but whether we beat the French or they

beat us, I suspect I will always get the same welcome at the Jockey Club in Paris and the Mediterranean Club in Nice. But those nobodies over there, what will their glorious and victorious country do for them? They won't get much of it in their village. All they know of the 'Fatherland' is the taxgatherers and the police, and they will be what they have always been. And yet there they are full of enthusiasm, I can't deny it—it shakes even me. Well, we ought to thank the poets who sing about patriotism and military glory, and the schoolmasters who teach the people's hearts the poets' words. Marvelous power of a word that can lead a proaic peasant to give his life for an abstraction, an imagination!"

But even as with the quickness of lightning these thoughts passed through his mind, the Prince felt a sensation that amazed him. It was a feeling of confusion, of shame. It seemed as if he had been speaking his thoughts aloud and as if a group of grave and noble figures had listened to his words, and were now looking at him in a silence full of pity and disdain. Down in the depths of his soul, where the mocking light of his skeptical spirit failed to penetrate, he seemed to hear an imperial voice rebuking him and silencing his doubt.

"I am right," his mind said.

"You are wrong," declared the voice.

"Well, anyway, I shall not deceive *myself* with romantic dreams," cried Reason; but already it seemed to the Prince that the words were spoken by a stranger, and he shrank back from them indignantly.

By this time the Third Westphalians had covered the entire slope of the ditch, the sharpshooters were already at the top. There was a moment's hesitation, for the first heads that appeared above the ditch called forth a deadly fire from the enemy. Several men fell, but those behind pressed on, and in spite of their terrible fatigue, tried with hands and feet to make the ascent that would have been play to men in good condition. As they marched on, all on fire with noble ardor, Heine's words came back to the Prince: "How I love the dear, good Westphalians! They are so sure, so firm, so faithful. It is magnificent to see them on the field of battle, those heroes, with their lion hearts."

Pushed on by their "lion hearts," the Westphalians continued to scramble up the slope, expending their last breath in the effort to go forward. But the French, maddened by this outburst, forced them, after a terrible combat man to man, to recoil to the bottom of the ditch, which began to fill up with heaps of dead and wounded. The survivors tried to retreat up the other slope, and now the spectators above beheld a heart-rending sight. The men were so completely exhausted that they could not make the easy ascent. The muskets fell from their hands, and the French made many prisoners.

Above there was the greatest excitement. The Eighth Westphalians arrived, commanded by the General in person, and started immediately to the aid of its comrades. The French were forced back and many prisoners were recaptured. But the advantage was of short duration. New masses of the enemy's infantry

were coming up, and in the distance the cavalry were seen approaching.

Prince Louis had followed the combat with increasing emotion—he felt his heart beat alternately with joy and fear. It seemed to him now that the critical moment had come, and he read the same impression in the faces of the other officers. The Colonel called his orderly and sprang into the saddle. The trumpets sounded, and a sudden movement passed through the regiment. In a moment every one was on horseback, sabres clinked against the spurs, the horses neighed. Again the trumpets sounded and the whole troop began the march.

Prince Louis glanced at his watch—it was half-past six in the evening. As he rode along at the head of the first squadron, a short distance from the Colonel and adjutants, he felt himself seized by a sensation he had never in his life experienced. The madness, the feverish impatience of a moment before had melted away with the consciousness of acting for a given purpose. The knowledge of activity, of seeking a definite end, brought him rest. He stopped looking for reasons; he thought no more of criticizing. The spirit of doubt was driven out of him. He obeyed with the ardor, the belief, the simple obedience of a child, the irresistible command that was pushing his entire being forward. This man, so proud of his *ego*, he, who had always sought happiness by the unlimited activity of his personal will, now found that will so crushed and bound that it was scarcely perceptible. A Power, call it Natural Law, call it the Divine

Will, that is ever manifesting itself by the course of history, had entered into him and taken possession of him. He was no longer master of his destiny, he was taken out of himself by a stranger—was it a supernatural vision, a great genius, a Delivering Christ?—Louis felt himself only a screw, a rivet in the machinery of the world's history, and strange to say this dissolving of his individuality in a great whole, as complete as the melting of a piece of sugar in a glass of water, caused him neither sorrow nor regret. On the contrary, a strange pleasure penetrated his entire being and made him tremble with joy. He felt himself very small, yet at the same time he saw in himself something great that transcended the limit of his own personality. In a word, he had found at last that sensation he had always desired. He was delivered from his prison of egotism and at large among great generalities.

The regiment was now descending the slope, avoiding the heaps of dead and wounded. The horses quickly ascended the opposite side and, the trumpets sounding, the regiment separated into two lines and advanced.

What followed might have been taken for a representation of the conflict of the gods in Valhalla. The French cuirassiers, riding toward the sun, were illumined with an unearthly light, their shining sabres seemed like tongues of flame, their cuirasses and helmets shone like white-hot steel. The German dragoons had their backs to the sun, and the long black shadows of horses and horsemen galloping ahead along

the ground made it look as if sombre ghosts were leading the living to the attack. The two troops met with a terrible shock. The sublime vision of the moment before was gone, and in its stead was a horrible, confused *mêlée*. Men fought hand to hand, plunging their sabres into the bodies of their enemies, without knowing exactly what they did. The French were forced to retreat, still fighting. The Germans pursued, hurrahing with joy, their horses dripping with blood.

The pursuit stopped near a little brook. Prince Louis felt as if he were awaking from a dream; he caressed his noble horse and looked about him. The enemy's artillery was being drawn off; the survivors of the cuirassiers followed the artillery. In the distance the columns of infantry were also retreating, keeping up an irregular, ineffectual fire.

"It is strange," observed a young lieutenant near the Prince, showing him his sabre, "my sabre is covered with blood up to the hilt, and yet I have not the least idea how it happened."

The Prince was about to answer, when he felt a terrible blow on his chest, as if he had been struck by the hand of an invisible giant, or by the horn of a bull. He put his hand to his breast. It was covered with blood. He just realized that he must have been struck by a ball, when he lost consciousness.

When he came to himself, he was lying on the trampled ground, his head resting against a saddle. His tunic was unfastened and his comrades were standing about him. He felt no pain, only a sen-

sation of great fatigue, hard to describe, a little like that of a man who is drowning.

"How do you feel, Prince?" asked the lieutenant-colonel, who was bending over him.

"It seems to me," he answered, in a voice that could scarcely be heard, a slight smile on his lips, "as if I must cry: 'Long live the King, long live the Fatherland.'"

These were his last words.

A NEW-YEAR'S EVE CONFESSION

BY HERMANN SUDERMANN



Sudermann, born in Prussia, in 1857, began as druggist's clerk, then tutor, then journalist, until finally he wrote "Honor," a social satire that now places him, with Hauptmann, leader of the German naturalistic dramatists, as "Dame Care" places him among German novelists.

The particular merit of Sudermann, as playwright, lies in his ability to seize upon the most convincing traits of character, and in describing familiar things, with a vein of dry humor. He has surprising invention of plot, and skill in working it out, but his art is often marred by cheap theatrical devices, brutalities, and concessions to public taste. His language is flexible, clear, rich in coloring.

The short story here given is the most satisfactory of a collection called "In Twilight," published in 1890—familiar, colloquial, fireside monologues with a woman of the world.

Since 1894, sickness has withdrawn Sudermann from close contact with the world, and weakened his powers of dealing with life.



A NEW-YEAR'S EVE CONFESSION

BY HERMANN SUDERMANN

THANKS be to God, dear lady, that I may once more sit beside you for a peaceful chat. The holiday tumult is past, and you have a little leisure for me again.

Oh, this Christmas season! I believe that it was invented by some evil demon expressly to annoy us poor bachelors, to show us the more clearly all the desolation of our homeless existence. For others a source of joy, it is for us a torture. Of course, I know, we are not all entirely lonely—for us also the joy of making others happy may blossom, that joy upon which rests the whole secret of the blessed holiday mood. But the pleasure of joining in the happiness of others is tainted for us by a touch of self-irony partly, and also by that bitter longing to which—in contrast to homesickness—I would give the name of “marriage sickness.”

Why didn't I come to pour out my heart to you? you ask, you pitying soul, you—you that can give of your sympathy in the same rich measure that others of your sex save for their dainty malices. There's a reason. You remember what Speidel says in his delightful “Lonely Sparrows,” which you sent me the day after Christmas, with a true perception of my state

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of mind? "The bachelor by instinct," he says, "does not desire comfort. Once he is unhappy, he wishes to have the full enjoyment of his unhappiness."

Beside the "lonely sparrow" whom Speidel portrays, there is another sort of bachelor, the so-called "friend of the family." By this I do not mean those professional wreckers of homes, in whose eyes the serpent glitters as they settle down comfortably at the hospitable hearthstone. I mean the good uncle, papa's former school friend, who rocks the baby on his knee while he reads the magazine essays to mama, carefully omitting all the doubtful portions.

I know men who give up their entire lives to the service of some family whose friendship they have won—men who live on without desire by the side of a beautiful woman whom in their hearts they secretly adore.

You doubt me? Oh, it is the words "without desire" that disturb you? You are right, perhaps. In the depth of even the tamest heart some wild desire lies, but—understand me here—it lies bound in chains.

As an instance I would like to tell you about a conversation which took place day before yesterday, on New Year's Eve, between two old, two very old, gentlemen. It is my secret how I came to know of this conversation, and I ask you not to let it go any further. May I begin, then?

Picture to yourself, as a setting for my story, a high-ceilinged room, old-fashioned in furnishings, lighted by a green-shaded, impertinently bright hanging-lamp

of the sort our parents had in use before the era of petroleum. The cone of light that goes out from the flame falls upon a round, white-clothed table, upon which stands the various ingredients for a New-Year's punch, while several drops of oil show out broadly in the centre of the table.

My two old gentlemen sat half in the shadow of the green lamp-shade, moldering ruins both, from long-past days, bowed and trembling, gazing before them with the dull glance of the dimming eyes of age. One, the host, is evidently an old officer, as you would recognize at once from his carefully wound cravat, his pointed, sharply-cut mustache, and his martial eye-brows. He sits holding the handle of his roller-chair like a crutch tightly clasped in both hands. He is motionless except for his jaws, which move up and down ceaselessly with the motion of chewing. The other, who sits near him on the sofa, a tall, spare figure, his narrow shoulders crowned by the high-domed head of a thinker, draws occasional thin puffs of smoke from a long pipe which is just about to go out. Among the myriad wrinkles of his smooth-shaven, dried-up face, framed in a wreath of snow-white curls, there lurked a quiet, gentle smile, a smile which the peace of resignation alone can bring to the face of age.

The two were silent. In the perfect stillness of the room the soft bubbling of the burning oil, mingled with the soft bubbling of the tobacco juice. Then, from the darkness of the background, the hanging clock began to announce hoarsely the eleventh hour. "This is the hour when she would begin to make the punch,"

said the man with the domed forehead. His voice was soft, with a slight vibration.

"Yes, this is the time," repeated the other. The sound of his speech was hard, as if the rattle of command still lingered in it.

"I did not think it would be so desolate without her," said the first speaker again.

The host nodded, his jaws moving.

"She made the New Year's punch for us four-and-forty times," continued his friend.

"Yes, it's as long as that since we moved to Berlin, and you became our friend," said the old soldier.

"Last year at this time we were all so jolly together," said the other. "She sat in the armchair there, knitting socks for Paul's eldest. She worked busily, saying she must finish it by twelve o'clock. And she did finish it. Then we drank our punch and spoke quite calmly of death. And two months later they carried her away. As you know, I have written a fat book on the 'Immortality of the Idea.' You never cared much about it—I don't care for it myself now that your wife is dead. The entire Idea of the Universe means nothing to me now."

"Yes, she was a good wife," said the husband of the dead woman; "she cared for me well. When I had to go out for service at five o'clock in the morning, she was always up before me to look after my coffee. Of course she had her faults. When she got into philosophizing with you—h'm."

"You never understood her," murmured the other, the corners of his mouth trembling in controlled re-

sentment. But the glance that rested long on his friend's face was gentle and sad, as if a secret guilt pressed upon his soul.

After a renewed pause, he began:

"Franz, there is something I want to tell you, something that has long troubled me, something that I do not want to carry with me to my grave."

"Well, fire away," said the host, taking up the long pipe that stood beside his chair.

"There was once—something—between your wife and me."

The host let his pipe fall back again, and stared at his friend with wide-opened eyes.

"No jokes please, doctor," he said finally.

"It is bitter earnest, Franz," replied the other. "I have carried it about with me these forty years, but now it is high time to have it out with you."

"Do you mean to say that the dead woman was untrue to me?" cried the husband angrily.

"For shame, Franz," said his friend with a soft, sad smile.

The old soldier murmured something and lit his pipe.

"No, she was as pure as God's angels," continued the other. "It is you and I who are the guilty ones. Listen to me. It is now forty-three years ago; you had just been ordered here as captain to Berlin, and I was teaching at the University. You were a gay bird then, as you know."

"H'm," remarked the host, raising his trembling old hand to his mustache.

"There was a beautiful actress with great black eyes and little white teeth—do you remember?"

"*Do I?* Bianca was her name," answered the other as a faded smile flashed over his weather-beaten, self-indulgent face. "Those little white teeth could bite, I can tell you."

"You deceived your wife, and she suspected it. But she said nothing and suffered in silence. She was the first woman who had come into my life since my mother's death. She came into it like a shining star, and I gazed up to her in adoration as one might adore a star. I found the courage to ask her about her trouble. She smiled and said that she was not feeling quite strong yet—you remember it was shortly after the birth of your Paul. Then came New-Year's Eve—forty-three years ago to-night. I came in at eight o'clock as usual. She sat over her embroidery and I read aloud to her while we waited for you. One hour after another passed and still you did not come. I saw that she grew more and more uneasy, and began to tremble. I trembled with her. I knew where you were, and I feared you might forget the hour of midnight in the arms of that woman. She had dropped her work, I read no longer. A terrible silence weighed upon us. Then I saw a tear gather under her eyelid and drop slowly down upon the embroidery in her lap. I sprang up to go out and look for you. I felt myself capable of tearing you away from that woman by force. But at the same moment she sprang up also from her seat—this very same place where I am sitting now.

"Where are you going?" she cried, terror in every feature. 'I am going to fetch Franz,' I said. And then she screamed aloud: 'For God's sake, *you* stay with me at least—don't *you* forsake me also.'

"And she hurried to me, laid both hands on my shoulders and buried her tear-bedewed face on my breast. I trembled in every fibre, no woman had ever stood so near me before. But I controlled myself, and soothed and comforted her—she was so sadly in need of comfort. You came in soon after. You did not notice my emotion, your cheeks were burning, your eyes heavy with the fatigue of love. Since that evening a change had come over me, a change that frightened me. When I had felt her soft arms around my neck, when I had felt the fragrance of her hair, the shining star fell from its heaven, and—a woman stood before me, beautiful, breathing love. I called myself a villain, a betrayer, and to sooth my conscience somewhat I set about separating you from your mistress. Fortunately I had some money at my disposal. She was satisfied with the sum I offered her, and—"

"The devil!" exclaimed the old soldier in surprise; "then you were the cause of that touching farewell letter that Bianca sent me—in which she declared that she must give me up—although her heart would break?"

"Yes, I was the cause of it," said his friend. "But listen, there is more to tell. I had thought to purchase peace with that money, but the peace did not come. The wild thoughts ran riot all the more madly in my brain. I buried myself in my work—it was just about

that time that I was working out the plan of my book on the 'Immortality of the Idea'—but still could not find peace. And thus the year passed and New-Year's Eve came round again. Again we sat together here, she and I. You were at home this time, but you lay sleeping on the sofa in the next room. A merry Casino dinner had tired you. And as I sat beside her, and my eyes rested on her pale face, then memory came over me with irresistible power. Once more I would feel her head on my breast, once more I would kiss her—and then—the end, if need be. Our eyes meet for an instant; I seemed to see a secret understanding, an answer in her glance. I could control myself no longer; I fell at her feet and buried my burning face in her lap.

"I lay there motionless for two seconds perhaps, then I felt her soft hand rest cool upon my head, and her voice, soft and gentle, spoke the words: 'Be brave, dear friend; yes, be brave—do not deceive the man sleeping so trustfully in the next room.' I sprang up and gazed about, bewildered. She took a book from the table and handed it to me. I understood, opened it at random, and began to read aloud. I do not know what it was I read, the letters danced before my eyes. But the storm within my soul began to abate, and when twelve o'clock struck, and you came in sleepily for the New-Year's wishes, it was as if that moment of sin lay far, far behind me, in days that had long passed.

"Since that day I have been calmer. I knew that she did not return my love, and that I had only pity to hope from her. Years passed, your children grew

up and married, we three grew old together. You gave up your wild life, forgot the other women, and lived for one alone, as I did. It was not possible that I should ever cease to love her, but my love took on another shape; earthly desires faded, and a bond of the spirit grew up between us. You have often laughed when you heard us philosophizing together. But if you had known how close were our souls at such moments you would have been very jealous. And now she is dead, and before the next New-Year's Eve comes round we two may follow her. It is, therefore, high time that I rid myself of this secret and say to you, 'Franz, I sinned against you once, forgive me.'"

He held out an imploring hand toward his friend; but the other answered, grumbling: "Nonsense. There is nothing to forgive. What you told me there, I knew it long ago. She confessed it herself forty years ago. And now I will tell you why I ran after other women until I was an old man—because she told me then that you were the one and only love of her life."

The friend stared at him without speaking, and the hoarse clock began to strike—midnight.

BRIC-A-BRAC AND DESTINIES

BY GABRIELE REUTER



Not long ago, in 1895, Gabriele Reuter published a book called, in the translation, "Of Good Family." It was very popular, for it was not only well written, in an up-to-date, realistic style, softened by imagination, but it dealt with the position of the modern woman—it was full of moving pictures of family life and manners. Since then the author has stood in Germany as the woman-weaver of questions and problems concerning her own sex, in realistic but sober colors.

Gabriele Reuter was born in 1859, at Alexandria, Egypt. She was educated in Germany, however, and now lives at Berlin. Since 1878 she has devoted herself to literature, writing articles, novels, and stories for the journals and reviews.



BRIC-A-BRAC AND DESTINIES

BY GABRIELE REUTER

THE temptation to wait over a train and visit my old friend in his new home was very strong. I decided to do it.

I found his name on the door of a pretty little villa in an attractive street.

"Would you wait a little? The doctor is expected home at any moment," the servant told me, as she ushered me into the drawing-room.

"Will you give my card to Mrs. Hartens?" I said.

I was rather curious to see the woman he had chosen, this dear, queer old chap, this enthusiast for Hellenic ideals and the cult of free natural beauty.

When the servant had left me alone I looked curiously around the room. I saw curtains of expensive plush, carved mahogany furniture, a clean-washed palm, heavy bronze lamps—the usual sort of things that are given for wedding presents among well-to-do people. There was nothing that could be called ugly—and yet—and this was where he lived now? This was the result of all his dreams?

But why didn't she come?

Probably the young wife could not make up her mind whether she ought to receive her husband's old friend in his absence.

Translated by Grace Isabel Colbron. Copyright, 1907, by P. F. Collier & Son.

(929)

I yawned a little. Time was flying, and I did not know when I might ever pass through this town again. I looked absent-mindedly over the table beside which I sat. On it there stood a majolica plate holding visiting cards, surrounded by large, handsomely bound books. To the right of the plate there stood a vase with fresh flowers. To the left, slightly to one side, there was a little mother-of-pearl bowl, in which lay an amulet with an engraved stone and a tiny smelling bottle of Venetian glass, the sort of thing that looks expensive and probably costs but a few soldi.

I heard a noise in the room adjoining, listened impatiently, and then took the amulet in my hand and examined the stone. It bore a finely worked head of Apollo.

A carriage stopped before the house. A carriage? Then Philip must have a good practise. Strange—I could imagine that he would be more apt to explain to his patients that all medical theory was a swindle anyhow—

A shout of rejoicing came from the corridor: "Oh, but that's great! But, dearest, why didn't you—"

"I did not think it was right—without you."

"Little goosie! Dearest little goosie!"

Then followed a storm of kisses, interrupted by a reproach: "Oh, Philip, she can hear everything."

"Of course she can! Let her!" he cried happily, tore the door open, and pushed a pretty little blond, doll-like creature before him into the room.

"There—there you are! You must love each other, you two!"

His delicate, scholarly face shone in purest joy. The young wife held out her hand to me and told me that she was very happy to make my acquaintance. Philip had told her so much about me.

And yet she kept me waiting for half an hour!

When she left us to order another plate for the dinner-table, Philip's eyes followed her, shining with love. And then he explained to me that his choice had been dictated mainly by common sense, because he believed it necessary for his restless experimenting nature to have some one at his side whose character was calm and decided. And his little wife was very firm and decided.

Four years had passed before I again found an opportunity to hear anything from the young couple.

Philip never wrote letters, on principle. I therefore should hardly have felt that I had the right to call him my friend. And yet I made a detour that I might visit him and his wife.

The silence in the house was noticeable. And the undisturbed order everywhere was almost distressing. It was as if the furniture were never used. A door opened cautiously and was shut again equally carefully. A carefully deadened step approached the room, and Philip entered, alone.

"This is nice! It's awfully good of you," he said cordially, giving me both his hands.

But after the first greeting I noticed an embarrassment in his manner, a something which had never been part of his character before. With a certain

formal politeness, he explained to me that his wife was ill, but that he would go and see if she would not feel equal to a word with me.

After some time he returned, alone, as before. "Theresa asks that you will do us the pleasure of dining with us to-morrow."

Then he suggested that he and I should spend the evening in a concert garden.

Several hours passed happily under the green trees, cheered with the sound of pleasantly distant music, and enlivened by one of our old-time conversations. Philip became quite himself again. He had the nature of a poet, who can form anew for himself the ancient dreams of all mankind. And he was something of a reformer also. As he described to me what his ideal of life would be, an existence without family ties, without exacting sentimentality and excitement, a life of pure calm beauty, I could not avoid the question: "But what in the world can you do with all this part of your nature in your present existence?" A second later I was sorry for what I had said; his smile was like an expression of pain.

Toward noon the following day Philip called on me at the hotel.

His eyes were dull, his spiritual, mobile features were dead and set in heavy lines.

"I must ask your pardon," he murmured. "Theresa does not feel well enough yet to see anybody. I thought as much yesterday."

I inquired sympathetically as to the trouble.

"She could pull herself together perfectly well. But

she won't. 'She won't do it, just because it would please me,' he murmured in suppressed anger, throwing back his head impatiently, with a moan as of pain. "And I—I need joy and merriment—and brightness— And—you saw what it was yesterday. That's the way it always is now—always."

"But you are a physician," I exclaimed. "Can you not give orders? This shutting herself up is all wrong for a young woman like that."

He burst out into a loud, bitter laugh. "A physician?— Why, she thinks I'm ill and she is well— And that isn't all— She never can forgive me for our child's death—" He stared out ahead of him as if he were looking into a world of misery.

"But how dare she?" I whispered. "A thing like that—is fate."

He shrugged his shoulders. "I am a physician—I should have helped."

And then he told me the story in a dull and weary tone. An epidemic of scarlet fever had broken out in the city. His wife had demanded that he should refuse to treat severe cases, in consideration for herself and the child. He would not comply with her wish and brought the infection into the house. "From her point of view, Theresa is quite right in hating me," he said, thoughtfully. "But she acts and talks as if it were only her child—it was *my* son also."

We set out for a restaurant that he had recommended. He was quiet and absent-minded. Suddenly he looked at his watch and said: "You're an independent woman. You don't mind going there

alone, do you? I have a patient to visit and will meet you there later. Will this suit you?"

I assented, understanding that he had already repented of his confession and wished to be alone. I waited the rest of the afternoon, but without the hope of seeing him again. He did not come, and I left the town that evening.

It was in quite another city, in another corner of Germany, where I was visiting relatives, when one day some one asked me: "Aren't you a friend of Dr. Philip Hartens? According to the directory he lives here now, quite near us. Would you want to look him up?"

"Of course I would."

An hour later I might have believed that the six years which had passed between that day and my first visit to the young couple had been a dream only. For I sat beside the very same table at which I had waited before. The friendly spring sunshine shone on the gold lettering of the large books that surrounded the majolica plate, mirrored itself in the vase with fresh flowers, and awoke a delicate play of color from the little mother-of-pearl bowl. There were also the amulet with the head of Apollo and the little glass bottle. The sight of these old friends caused me to smile, just as Theresa entered. The delicate outlines of her figure had not changed, she had become frozen into them, as it were. There was something of the old maid about her, and the stubbornness, which had been a piquant touch in her soft young face, was now hardened into the chief quality of its expression. She took my hand.

"I'm very sorry to hear that Philip is away."

"My husband has left me," was her short, sharp answer.

I looked at her, dazed. "Why—?"

"Yes. I suppose you did not imagine that he would forget himself to that extent?" She smoothed her little black silk apron and looked at me with an expression that was almost scorn.

"No—I certainly should not have believed that," I answered candidly. "How could it have happened?"

Naturally, I did not expect an explanation. But Theresa began of herself to tell me the story of her unhappy marriage; began to tell it with a self-possession which showed that she felt assured of a tribute of sympathy from every one. She told me of her fruitless attempts to make of her husband a sensible, useful, practical husband and citizen. For a time everything seemed to go right—until the child died. But from then on his guilty conscience had drawn him more and more away from her and from her influence. He neglected his practise more and more, he spoke quite openly in terms of scorn about his profession, he fell into bad company, began to go about with people who let their hair grow and didn't wear shoes—and with them he appeared to have entirely lost all sense of what was decent and sensible.

I listened in silence, shocked in my inmost heart to see how her hatred seemed to have robbed this woman of all sense of shame.

"But Philip is a noble and true character," I said

finally. "He goes his own way perhaps— But, believe me, he will come to himself again in solitude."

"In solitude?" she queried, with a scornful dropping of the corners of her mouth. "Philip is utterly ruined, I tell you. Because I refused to become a pupil to his immoral theories of life, he sought and found a more credulous companion. He is with her now, in Greece, I believe, or God knows where—"

The faded eyes in the embittered little face gazed angrily into the distance, as if her spirit followed her husband and the other woman.

Then her glance fell slowly back to the table, and she noticed that during her narrative I had mechanically taken the amulet from the little pearl bowl and had let it fall upon one of the books.

Crushing her moistened handkerchief in her left hand, with the right she took up the amulet, laid it back in its place beside the little glass bottle, and pushed the little bowl until it stood just as it had before, to the left side of the majolica plate.

Then I understood my poor friend, and my heart forgave him.

THE FUR COAT

BY LUDWIG FULDA



Fulda's greatest achievement, perhaps, is his translation into German of Molière's masterpieces, the success of which probably led him to also translate De Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac." But his popularity rests chiefly on his dramas, the best known of which is "The Talisman," and on his short stories. When Fulda went to Munich in 1884, he came for a short time under the influence of Paul Heyse, evident in his short stories of the period, but soon fell into the inevitable realism of the present age in fiction. Later still he applied himself closely to the study of the language and artistic form of poetry. It is not surprising, then, to find his style so graceful and elegant.

Fulda was born in 1862 at Frankfort-on-Main. His early studies at Heidelberg, Berlin, and Leipzig were chiefly in German philology, history of literature, and philosophy. For his book on Christian Science he received a university degree.



1

THE FUR COAT
THE STORY OF A MATRIMONIAL DIFFERENCE
BY LUDWIG FULDA

PROF. MAX WIEGAND TO DR. GUSTAV SPRAUCH.

BERLIN, November 20.

DEAR GUSTAV—I have some news to tell you to-day which will certainly surprise you. I have separated from my wife, or rather we have separated from each other. We have come to an amicable agreement henceforth to live entirely independent of each other. My wife has gone to her family in Freiburg, where she will no doubt remain. I am for the present in our old house; perhaps in the spring I may look for a smaller house—perhaps not, for I can hardly hope to find so quiet a workroom as I now have, and the idea of moving appals me, especially when I think of my large library. You will, of course, want to know what has happened, though, to tell the truth, nothing has happened. The world will seek for all possible and impossible reasons why two people who married for love and who have for eleven years lived what is called happily together should now have decided to part. Yes, this world which thinks itself so wise, but whose judgments are nevertheless

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- so petty, so superficial, will doubtless be of the opinion that there is something hidden—will include this case too in one of the two great categories prepared for such affairs, because it can not conceive of the fact that life in its inexhaustible variety never repeats itself and that the same circumstances may assume different aspects according to the character and disposition of those interested. I need not tell you this, my dear Gustav. You will understand how two finely organized natures should rebel against a tie which binds them together after they have once become fully convinced that in all matters of real importance a mutual understanding is possible.

My wife and I are too unlike. Between her views of life and mine there yawns an impassable gulf. The first few years I hoped to influence her, to win her to my ways of thinking—she seemed so docile, so yielding, took so warm an interest in my work, so willingly allowed herself to be taught by me. Not till after our children's death did she begin to change. Her grief at this loss—a grief which neither of us has ever been able to live down—matured her, made her independent of me. A tendency to morbid introspection took possession of her, and gave increased tenacity to those ideas and convictions which my influence had hitherto held in check, though not wholly eradicated. She plunged deeper and deeper into those mists of sentimentally fantastic imaginings, passionately demanding my concurrence in her views. She lost all interest in my professional work, evidently regarding the results of my researches in natural science as troops from

an enemy's camp. At last there was hardly a subject in the wide realm of nature and human existence on which we agreed. To be sure we never came to an open quarrel, but the breach between us was constantly widening. Every day we saw more and more plainly that though we lived side by side, we no longer belonged to each other. This discovery irritated and distressed us, and at last forced all other feelings into the background. If we had not once loved each other so dearly, or even if we had now ceased to feel a mutual respect, this state of affairs might perhaps have lasted for years, but our ideas of the true meaning of marriage were too lofty, our sense of our own dignity as human beings too profound to permit us to be content with so incomplete a realization of our ideals. I hardly know who spoke first, but our resolution was at once taken, and the decisive words uttered as calmly and naturally as the overripe fruit falls from the tree. For the first time in many years we were able with perfect unanimity of sentiment to discuss a subject of the greatest importance to us both, and this fact alone soothed our overwrought nerves. We parted yesterday with the utmost decorum, without a word of reproach, a note of discord. Memories of our early married life, of the long years we had lived together, made it difficult to refrain from some manifestation of tenderness, and I assure you that I never felt greater respect for my wife than at the moment when, all petty considerations cast aside, the true magnanimity of her nature asserted itself. Her manner, what she said, and also what she did not say, robbed the situation of all

trace of the commonplace, and gave it dignity. Deeply moved, almost in tears, we clasped hands in farewell, so we may look back upon the closing scene of our wedded life with unalloyed satisfaction.

I had already, with her consent, referred all business details to our lawyers, for we were not even to communicate with each other by letter.

Life must begin again for both of us, and already I breathe more freely. The Rubicon is passed. I believe that you will congratulate me.

PROF. MAX WIEGAND TO DR. GUSTAV STRAUCH.

BERLIN, December 12.

DEAR GUSTAV—Pardon me that I have so long delayed thanking you for your answer of friendly sympathy to my last letter.

I have been in no condition to write, and even now find it difficult. You congratulate me without reserve on a step which you regard as essential to my welfare and to my intellectual development, but you do not take into consideration what it means to separate from one who has for eleven years been one's constant companion, day and night. Indeed, it is only during these last dreary weeks that I, myself, have realized what the change signifies to me. Habit is all powerful, especially with men who, like you and me, live in the intellectual world and so require a solid sub-structure.

How are we to take observations from the tower battlements when its foundations are not firmly established? Of course, I am as certain as ever. I was that

our decision is for the best interests of us both, but in this queer world of ours we can take no step without unlooked-for results.

I am bothered from morn till night with trifles to which I have never given a thought since my bachelor days—things which I will not mention, so absurdly insignificant are they—and yet they rob me of my time and destroy my peace. I am at a loss what steps to take to rid myself of the thousand petty cares and annoyances which my wife has hitherto borne for me. These servants! Now that the cat is away they think that they can do just as they please, and you have no idea of the silly obstacles over which I am continually stumbling, of the wretched pitfalls which beset my path. Here is one instance out of many: For several days it has been very cold, and I can not find my fur coat. With the chambermaid's assistance I have turned the whole house upside down, until she finally remembered that my wife, last spring, sent it to a furrier's to be kept from the moth. But to which furrier? I have been to a dozen and can not find it.

If I had only not agreed with my wife that we were, under no circumstances, to write to each other, I should simply ask her—but it is best so. No strain of the commonplace must mingle with the sad echoes of our farewell. No—a farce never follows a drama. Perhaps she might even imagine that I seize the first pretext to renew relations with her.

Never!

To-day it is six below zero.

PROF. MAX WIEGAND TO FRAU EMMA WIEGAND.

BERLIN, December 14.

DEAR EMMA—You will be greatly surprised at receiving a letter from me in spite of our mutual agreement, but do not fear that I have any intention of opening a correspondence with you. Our relations terminated with all possible dignity, and the sealed door shall never be reopened. I have but to ask a simple question which you alone can answer. What is the name of the man to whom you sent my fur coat last spring? Lina has forgotten the address. Hoping soon to receive an answer, for which I thank you in advance,

MAX.

FRAU EMMA WIEGAND TO PROF. MAX WIEGAND.

FREIBURG, December 15.

DEAR MAX—His name is Palaschke, and he is on Zimmer Street. I can not understand Lina's forgetfulness, as she took the coat there herself.

EMMA.

PROF. MAX WIEGAND TO FRAU EMMA WIEGAND.

BERLIN, December 17.

DEAR EMMA—I must trouble you once more—for the last time. Herr Palaschke refuses to let the coat go without the ticket, as he has had several disagreeable experiences which have made it necessary to be very strict. But where is the ticket? I spent the whole morning looking for it, and, of course, Lina has not the slightest idea where it is. She flew into a rage when I found a little fault with her, and she leaves the

house to-morrow. I prefer paying her till the end of her engagement, and shall also give her a moderate Christmas gift, for I can not stand such an impertinent person about me.

Well—be so kind as to write me a line telling me where to find the ticket. I have already taken a severe cold for want of the fur coat.

Hoping that you are well and quite comfortable with your family. MAX.

FRAU EMMA WIEGAND TO PROF. MAX WIEGAND.

FREIBURG, December 19.

DEAR MAX—The ticket is either in the second or third upper drawer of the little wardrobe in the dressing-room or in my desk, in the right or left pigeon-hole. I could find it in a minute if I were there. Lina has great faults, but she is very respectable. I doubt whether you can do better, and now, just before Christmas, you will not be able to replace her. You should have put up with her at least a fortnight longer, but it is none of my business. I hope your cold is better. I am quite well. EMMA.

PROF. MAX WIEGAND TO FRAU EMMA WIEGAND.

BERLIN, December 21.

DEAR EMMA—The ticket is not to be found either in the wardrobe or in the desk. Perhaps it slipped out when you were packing, and was thrown away. I can think of no other explanation.

To-morrow or next day I will again go to Herr Palaschke, and try to wheedle him out of my property.

by all possible blandishments and assurances, but to-day I am confined to my room, for my cold has resulted in a severe attack of neuralgia.

I had a dreadful scene with the cook yesterday. On the day of your departure she gave me notice, and when I tried to persuade her to remain she turned on me and told me in a very insolent manner that I knew nothing about housekeeping, and that it was only out of sympathy for you, dear Emma, that she had so long remained with us at such low wages, and that she should leave immediately. I answered calmly, but firmly, that she must stay till the end of her engagement. Then she began to cry and storm, and at last was so outrageously impertinent as to declare that even *you* could not manage to live with me. I lost my temper and must, I suppose, have called her an "impudent woman," though I can not remember saying it. Unfortunately for me I have had no experience in dealing with viragos.

Two hours later, after supper, I rang and discovered that she was already gone, bag and baggage, leaving in the kitchen a badly spelled *billet doux*, in which she threatened me with a lawsuit for calling her an "impudent woman," in case I should refuse to give her a certificate of character.

I am now entirely without servants. The porter's wife blacks my shoes for a handsome consideration, and brings me from the café meals which ought to be condemned by the health inspector. As you have truly remarked, it will be impossible to replace these women before the New Year, but I have already written to a

dozen employment bureaus, and will go myself as soon as I am able to leave the house. This has grown into a long letter, my dear Emma, but when the heart is full the pen runs rapidly.

I also suspect that abominable cook of taking my gold sleeve buttons—those left me by Uncle Friedrich—though I have, of course, no proof. Have you any idea where they are? If so please drop me a line. Good-by, my dear Emma, and I trust you are more comfortable than I am. Your MAX.

FRAU EMMA WIEGAND TO PROF. MAX WIEGAND.

FREIBURG, December 23.

DEAR MAX—I have read with much sympathy your account of your little mishaps and annoyances. The cook often spoke to me very much as she did to you, but I put up with it because she is a good cook, and only cooks who know nothing are polite. Now you see what I have had to stand for years, and that there are problems in that department also which can not be solved by natural science.

I can not, at this distance, advise you what to do, and should not consider myself justified in doing so now that our intimate relations have been terminated in so dignified a manner, as you so truly remark in your first letter. As for the furrier's ticket and the sleeve buttons, I will wager that I could find them both in five minutes. You *must* remember how often you have hunted in vain for a thing which I have found at the first attempt. Men occasionally discover a new truth but never an old button.

Since a correspondence has been begun by you, I have a little request to make. I forgot before I left to ask you for the letters which you wrote me during our engagement, and which at my request you put in your safe. They are my property, and I should like to have them as a reminder of happier days. Will you be so kind as to send them to me?

Wishing you a Merry Christmas, EMMA.

PROF. MAX WIEGAND TO FRAU EMMA WIEGAND.

BERLIN, December 25.

MY DEAR EMMA—Your kind wish that I might have a Merry Christmas has not been fulfilled. I never spent so melancholy a Christmas Eve. You will not wonder that I could not bear to accept the invitations of friends—to be a looker-on at family rejoicings—so I stayed at home, entirely alone. I found it utterly impossible to get a servant before New Year's, and yesterday was even without a helper from outside. The porter's wife put a cold supper on the table for me early in the afternoon, for she was too busy later with Christmas preparations for her children. A smoky oil lamp took the place of the Christmas tree which you always adorned so charmingly and with such exquisite taste every year, and there were none of those pretty surprises by which you supplied my wants and wishes almost before I was conscious of them. There was nothing on the Christmas table but my old fur coat, which Herr Palaschke—softened by my entreaties and assurances and perhaps also by the spirit of Christmastide—had allowed me to take the

preceding day. It was as cold as charity in the room, for the fire had gone out and it was beyond my skill to rekindle it, so I put on the fur coat, sat down by the smoky lamp, and read over the letters which I wrote you during the time of our engagement and which I had taken from their eleven years' resting-place to send to you to-day.

Dear Emma, I can not tell you how they have moved me. I cried like a child, not over the tragic ending of our marriage alone, but at the change in myself which I recognize. They are very immature and in many ways not in accordance with my present way of thinking, but what a fresh, frank, warm-blooded fellow I was then, and how I loved you! How happy I was! How artlessly and unreservedly did I give myself up to my happiness! Till now I have thought that there has been a gradual, slow change in you alone, but now I see that I also have altered, and God knows, when I compare the Max of those days with the Max of to-day, I do not know to which to give the preference. In the sleepless nights which I have lately spent, I have thought over the possibility of transforming myself into the Max I then was, and grave doubts have suggested themselves whether the differences in our views of matters and things were really as great as they seemed to us, whether there is not outside of them something eternally human, some neutral ground where we might continue to have interests in common.

Try and see, dear Emma, whether such a voice does not speak also to your soul. We can not undo the past, but nothing could give me greater consolation

in my present unhappy condition than to know that you could say yes to this question, for your departure has left a void in my house and in my life that I can never, never fill. Thy most unhappy MAX.

FRAU EMMA WIEGAND TO PROF. MAX WIEGAND.

FREIBURG, December 27.

DEAR MAX—I very willingly gave you information as long as it related only to tickets and sleeve buttons, but I must decline answering the question contained in your last letter. Did you really believe, you old Pedant, that I left your home—which was also mine—because we disagreed in our views of matters and things in general? Then you are mightily mistaken. I left you because I saw more plainly every day that you no longer loved me. Yes, I had become a burden to you—you wanted to get rid of me. If in that dignified parting scene you had said one single tender word to me, I should probably have stayed, but, as usual, you were on your high horse, from which you have now had so lamentable a tumble just because your servants have left you. I too have served you faithfully, though you do not seem to have recognized that fact. I never let the fire go out on your hearth. It was not *my* fault when it grew cold.

Who knows whether you would have noticed the void left by my going if your fur coat had not also been missing? This gave you an opportunity of opening a correspondence with me, and it seems to be only fitting that it should now close, since you have once

more regained possession of your property. I, at least, have nothing more to say.

Good-by forever,

EMMA.

PROF. MAX WIEGAND TO DR. GUSTAV STRAUCH.

BERLIN, January 8.

DEAR GUSTAV—I have a great piece of news to tell you. My wife returned to me yesterday, and at my earnest solicitation. I thought I could no longer live *with* her, but I find it equally impossible to live *without* her. I have just discovered that she too was very unhappy during the time of our separation, but she would never have acknowledged it, for her's is the stronger character of the two. I do not know how to explain the miracle, but we love each other more dearly than ever. We are celebrating a new honeymoon. The great questions of life drove us apart, but is it only the little ones which have reunited us? Would you suppose that one could find a half-desiccated heart in the pocket of an old fur coat? The stately edifice of my worldly knowledge totters on its foundations, dear Gustav. I have a great deal to unlearn. MAX.



THE DEAD ARE SILENT

BY ARTHUR SCHNITZLER



This Viennese dramatist, whose status as an author is still in the balance, was born in 1862. He studied medicine at the University of Vienna and afterward assisted his father at the Vienna General Polytechnic. At his father's death, in 1893, he gave up medicine as a profession and began his literary career with a volume of poems.

Schnitzler has the dramatic feeling in all that he writes—from his earliest poems, through his short stories, to his dramas proper, one of the most popular of which, "The Green Parot," was acted in French with great success at the Théâtre Antoine in Paris in 1907. Of his novels, one of the latest is "Lieutenant Gustl," published in 1900. His talent, however, is not yet formed—it is in a tentative state, grotesque, realistic, sentimental—but it will not remain so long, if it can produce many more such admirable stories as "The Dead Are Silent."





THE DEAD ARE SILENT

BY ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

HE could endure the quiet waiting in the carriage no longer; it was easier to get out and walk up and down. It was now dark; the few scattered lamps in the narrow side street quivered uneasily in the wind. The rain had stopped, the sidewalks were almost dry, but the rough-paved roadway was still moist, and little pools gleamed here and there.

"Strange, isn't it?" thought Franz. "Here we are scarcely a hundred paces from the Prater, and yet it might be a street in some little country town. Well, it's safe enough, at any rate. She won't meet any of the friends she dreads so much here."

He looked at his watch. "Only just seven, and so dark already! It is an early autumn this year . . . and then this confounded storm! . . ." He turned his coat-collar up about his neck and quickened his pacing. The glass in the street lamps rattled lightly.

"Half an hour more," he said to himself, "then I can go home. I could almost wish—that that half-hour were over." He stood for a moment on the corner, where he could command a view of both streets. "She'll surely come to-day," his thoughts ran on, while he struggled with his hat, which threatened to blow away. "It's Friday. . . . Faculty meeting at the Uni-

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versity; she needn't hurry home." He heard the clanging of street-car gongs, and the hour chimed from a nearby church tower. The street became more animated. Hurrying figures passed him, clerks of neighboring shops; they hastened onward, fighting against the storm. No one noticed him; a couple of half-grown girls glanced up in idle curiosity as they went by. Suddenly he saw a familiar figure coming toward him. He hastened to meet her. . . . Could it be she? On foot?

She saw him, and quickened her pace.

"You are walking?" he asked.

"I dismissed the cab in front of the theatre. I think I've had that driver before."

A man passed them, turning to look at the lady. Her companion glared at him, and the other passed on hurriedly. The lady looked after him. "Who was it?" she asked, anxiously.

"Don't know him. We'll see no one we know here, don't worry. But come now, let's get into the cab."

"Is that your carriage?"

"Yes."

"An open one?"

"It was warm and pleasant when I engaged it an hour ago."

They walked to the carriage; the lady stepped in.

"Driver!" called the man.

"Why, where is he?" asked the lady.

Franz looked around. "Well, did you ever? I don't see him anywhere."

"Oh—" her tone was low and timid.

"Wait a moment, child, he must be around here somewhere."

The young man opened the door of a little saloon, and discovered his driver at a table with several others. The man rose hastily. "In a minute, sir," he explained, swallowing his glass of wine.

"What do you mean by this?"

"All right, sir. . . . Be there in a minute." His step was a little unsteady as he hastened to his horses. "Where'll you go, sir?"

"Prater—Summer-house."

Franz entered the carriage. His companion sat back in a corner, crouching fearsomely under the shadow of the cover.

He took both her hands in his. She sat silent. "Won't you say good evening to me?"

"Give me a moment to rest, dear. I'm still out of breath."

He leaned back in his corner. Neither spoke for some minutes. The carriage turned into the Prater street, passed the Tegethoff Monument, and a few minutes later was rolling swiftly through the broad, dark Prater Avenue.

Emma turned suddenly and flung both arms around her lover's neck. He lifted the veil that still hung about her face, and kissed her.

"I have you again—at last!" she exclaimed.

"Do you know how long it is since we have seen each other?" he asked.

"Since Sunday."

"Yes, and that wasn't good for much."

"Why not? You were in our house."

"Yes—in your house. That's just it. This can't go on. I shall not enter your house again. . . . What's the matter?"

"A carriage passed us."

"Dear girl, the people who are driving in the Prater at such an hour, and in such weather, aren't noticing much what other people are doing."

"Yes—that's so. But some one might look in here, by chance."

"We couldn't be recognized. It's too dark."

"Yes—but can't we drive somewhere else?"

"Just as you like." He called to the driver, who did not seem to hear. Franz leaned forward and touched the man.

"Turn around again. What are you whipping your horses like that for? We're in no hurry, I tell you. Drive—let me see—yes—drive down the avenue that leads to the Reichs Bridge."

"The Reichs-strasse?"

"Yes. But don't hurry so, there's no need of it."

"All right, sir. But it's the wind that makes the horses so crazy."

Franz sat back again as the carriage turned in the other direction.

"Why didn't I see you yesterday?"

"How could I?" . . .

"You were invited to my sister's."

"Oh—yes."

"Why weren't you there?"

"Because I can't be with you—like that—with others

around. No, I just can't." She shivered. "Where are we now?" she asked, after a moment.

They were passing under the railroad bridge at the entrance to the Reichs-strasse.

"On the way to the Danube," replied Franz. "We're driving toward the Reichs Bridge. We'll certainly not meet any of our friends here," he added, with a touch of mockery.

"The carriage jolts dreadfully."

"We're on cobblestones again."

"But he drives so crooked."

"Oh, you only think so."

He had begun to notice himself that the vehicle was swaying to and fro more than was necessary, even on the rough pavement. But he said nothing, not wishing to alarm her.

"There's a great deal I want to say to you to-day, Emma."

"You had better begin then; I must be home at nine o'clock."

"A few words may decide everything."

"Oh, goodness, what was that!" she screamed. The wheels had caught in a car-track, and the carriage turned partly over as the driver attempted to free it. Franz caught at the man's coat. "Stop that!" he cried. "Why, you're drunk, man!"

The driver halted his horses with some difficulty. "Oh, no—sir—"

"Let's get out here, Emma, and walk."

"Where are we?"

"Here's the bridge already. And the wind is not

nearly as strong as it was. It will be nicer to walk a little. It's so hard to talk in the carriage."

Emma drew down her veil and followed him. "Don't you call this windy?" she exclaimed as she struggled against the gust that met her at the corner.

He took her arm, and called to the driver to follow them.

They walked on slowly. Neither spoke as they mounted the ascent of the bridge; and they halted where they could hear the flow of the water below them. Heavy darkness surrounded them. The broad stream stretched itself out in gray, indefinite outlines; red lights in the distance, floating above the water, awoke answering gleams from its surface. Trembling stripes of light reached down from the shore they had just left; on the other side of the bridge the river lost itself in the blackness of open fields. Thunder rumbled in the distance; they looked over to where the red lights soared. A train with lighted windows rolled between iron arches that seemed to spring up out of the night for an instant, to sink back into darkness again. The thunder grew fainter and more distant; silence fell again; only the wind moved, in sudden gusts.

Franz spoke at last, after a long silence. "We must go away."

"Of course," Emma answered, softly.

"We must go away," he continued, with more animation. "Go away altogether, I mean—"

"Oh, we can't!"

"Only because we are cowards, Emma."

"And my child?"

"He will let you have the boy, I know."

"But how shall we go?" Her voice was very low.
"You mean—to run away—"

"Not at all. You have only to be honest with him; to tell him that you can not live with him any longer; that you belong to me."

"Franz—are you mad?"

"I will spare you that trial, if you wish. I will tell him myself."

"No, Franz, you will do nothing of the kind."

He endeavored to read her face. But the darkness showed him only that her head was turned toward him.

He was silent a few moments more. Then he spoke quietly: "You need not fear; I shall not do it."

They walked toward the farther shore. "Don't you hear a noise?" she asked. "What is it?"

"Something is coming from the other side," he said.

A slow rumbling came out of the darkness. A little red light gleamed out at them. They could see that it hung from the axle of a clumsy country cart, but they could not see whether the cart was laden or not, and whether there were human beings on it. Two other carts followed the first. They could just see the outlines of a man in peasant garb on the last cart, and could see that he was lighting his pipe. The carts passed them slowly. Soon there was nothing to be heard but the low rolling of the wheels as their own carriage followed them. The bridge dropped gently to the farther shore. They saw the street disappear into blackness between rows of trees. Open fields lay before them to

Where was the coachman? She called him, but no answer came. She still sat there on the ground. She did not seem to be injured, although she ached all over. "What shall I do?" she thought; "what shall I do? How can it be that I am not injured? Franz!" she called again. A voice answered from somewhere near her.

"Where are you, lady? And where is the gentleman? Wait a minute, Miss—I'll light the lamps, so we can see. I don't know what's got into the beasts to-day. It ain't my fault, Miss, sure—they ran into a pile of stones."

Emma managed to stand up, although she was bruised all over. The fact that the coachman seemed quite uninjured reassured her somewhat. She heard the man opening the lamp and striking a match. She waited anxiously for the light. She did not dare to touch Franz again. "It's all so much worse when you can't see plainly," she thought. "His eyes may be open now—there won't be anything wrong. . . ."

A tiny ray of light came from one side. She saw the carriage, not completely upset, as she had thought, but leaning over toward the ground, as if one wheel were broken. The horses stood quietly. She saw the milestone, then a heap of loose stones, and beyond them a ditch. Then the light touched Franz's feet, crept up over his body to his face, and rested there. The coachman had set the lamp on the ground beside the head of the unconscious man. Emma dropped to her knees, and her heart seemed to stop beating as she looked into the face before her. It was ghastly white; the

eyes were half open, only the white showing. A thin stream of blood trickled down from one temple and ran into his collar. The teeth were fastened into the under lip. "No—no—it isn't possible," Emma spoke, as if to herself.

The driver knelt also and examined the face of the man. Then he took the head in both his hands and raised it. "What are you doing?" screamed Emma, hoarsely, shrinking back at the sight of the head that seemed to be rising of its own volition.

"Please, Miss—I'm afraid—I'm thinking—there's a great misfortune happened—"

"No—no—it's not true!" said Emma. "It can't be true!— You are not hurt? Nor am I—"

The man let the head he held fall back again into the lap of the trembling Emma. "If only some one would come—if the peasants had only passed fifteen minutes later."

"What shall we do?" asked Emma, her lips trembling.

"Why, you see, Miss, if the carriage was all right—but it's no good as it is—we've got to wait till some one comes—" he talked on, but Emma did not hear him. Her brain seemed to awake suddenly, and she knew what was to be done. "How far is it to the nearest house?" she asked.

"Not much further, Miss—there's Franz-Josefsland right there. We'd see the houses if it was lighter—it won't take five minutes to get there."

"Go there, then; I'll stay here— Go and fetch some one."

"I think I'd better stay here with you, Miss. Somebody must come; it's the main road."

"It'll be too late; we need a doctor at once."

The coachman looked down at the quiet face, then he looked at Emma, and shook his head.

"You can't tell," she cried.

"Yes, Miss—but there'll be no doctor in those houses."

"But there'll be somebody to send to the city—"

"Oh, yes, Miss—they'll be having a telephone there, anyway! We'll telephone to the Rescue Society."

"Yes, yes, that's it. Go at once, run—and bring some men back with you. Why do you wait? Go at once. Hurry!"

The man looked down again at the white face in her lap. "There'll be no use here for doctor or Rescue Society, Miss."

"Oh, go!—for God's sake go!"

"I'm going, Miss—but don't get afraid in the darkness here."

He hurried down the street. "'Twasn't my fault," he murmured as he ran. "Such an idea! to drive down this road this time o' night."

Emma was left alone with the unconscious man in the gloomy street.

"What shall I do now?" she thought. "It can't be possible—it can't." The thought circled dizzily in her brain—"It can't be possible." Suddenly she seemed to hear a low breathing. She bent to the pale lips—no—not the faintest breath came from them. The blood had dried on temple and cheek. She gazed at

the eyes, the half-closed eyes, and shuddered. Why couldn't she believe it? . . . It must be true—this was Death! A shiver ran through her—she felt but one thing—"This is a corpse. I am here alone with a corpse!—a corpse that rests on my lap!" With trembling hands she pushed the head away, until it rested on the ground. Then a feeling of horrible aloneness came over her. Why had she sent the coachman away? What should she do here all alone with this dead man in the darkness? If only some one would come—but what was she to do then if anybody did come? How long would she have to wait here? She looked down at the corpse again. "But I'm not alone with him," she thought, "the light is there." And the light seemed to her to become alive, something sweet and friendly, to which she owed gratitude. There was more life in this little flame than in all the wide night about her. It seemed almost as if this light was a protection for her, a protection against the terrible pale man who lay on the ground beside her. She stared into the light until her eyes wavered and the flame began to dance. Suddenly she felt herself awake—wide awake. She sprang to her feet. Oh, this would not do! It would not do at all—no one must find her here with him. She seemed to be outside of herself, looking at herself standing there on the road, the corpse and the light below her; she saw herself grow into strange, enormous proportions, high up into the darkness. "What am I waiting for?" she asked herself, and her brain reeled. "What am I waiting for? The people who might come? They don't need me. They will come,

and they will ask questions—and I—why am I here? They will ask who I am—what shall I answer? I will not answer them—I will not say a word—they can not compel me to talk.”

The sound of voices came from the distance.

“Already?” she thought, listening in terror. The voices came from the bridge. It could not be the men the driver was bringing with him. But whoever it was would see the light—and they must not see it, for then she would be discovered. She overturned the lantern with her foot, and the light went out. She stood in utter darkness. She could see nothing—not even him. The pile of stones shone dimly. The voices came nearer. She trembled from head to foot; they must not find her here. That was the only thing of real importance in all the wide world—that no one should find her here. She would be lost if they knew that this—this corpse—was her lover. She clasps her hands convulsively, praying that the people, whoever they were, might pass by on the farther side of the road, and not see her. She listens breathless. Yes, they are there, on the other side—women, two women, or perhaps three. What are they talking about? They have seen the carriage, they speak of it—she can distinguish words. “A carriage upset—” What else do they say? She can not understand—they walk on—they have passed her— Ah—thanks—thanks to Heaven!— And now? What now? Oh, why isn’t she dead, as he is? He is to be envied; there is no more danger, no more fear for him. But so much—so much for her to tremble for. She shivers at the thought of being

found here, of being asked, "Who are you?" She will have to go to the police station, and all the world will know about it—her husband—her child. She can not understand why she has stood there motionless so long. She need not stay here—she can do no good here—and she is only courting disaster for herself. She makes a step forward— Careful! the ditch is here—she crosses it—how wet it is—two paces more and she is in the middle of the street. She halts a moment, looks straight ahead, and can finally distinguish the gray line of the road leading onward into darkness. There—over there—lies the city. She can not see it, but she knows the way. She turns once more. It does not seem so dark now. She can see the carriage and the horses quite distinctly—and, looking hard, she seems to see the outline of a human body on the ground. Her eyes open wide. Something seems to clutch at her and hold her here—it is he—she feels his power to keep her with him. With an effort she frees herself. Then she perceives that it was the soft mud of the road that held her. And she walks onward—faster—faster—her pace quickens to a run. Only to be away from here, to be back in the light—in the noise—among men. She runs along the street, raising her skirt high, that her steps may not be hindered. The wind is behind her, and seems to push her along. She does not know what it is she flees from. Is it the pale man back there by the ditch? No, now she knows, she flees the living, not the dead, the living who will soon be there, and who will look for her. What will they think? Will they follow her? But they can not

catch up with her now, she is so far away, she is nearing the bridge, there is no danger. No one can know who she was, no one can possibly imagine who the woman was who drove down through the country road with the dead man. The driver does not know her; he would not recognize her if he should ever see her again. They will not take the trouble to find out who she is. Who cares? It was wise of her not to stay—and it was not cowardly either. Franz himself would say it was wise. She must go home; she has a husband, a child; she would be lost if any one should see her there with her dead lover. There is the bridge; the street seems lighter—she hears the water beneath her. She stands there, where they stood together, arm in arm—when was it? How many hours ago? It can not be long since then. And yet—perhaps she lay unconscious long, and it is midnight now, or near morning, and they have missed her at home. Oh, no—it is not possible. She knows that she was not unconscious, she remembers everything clearly. She runs across the bridge, shivering at the sound of her own steps. Now she sees a figure coming toward her; she slows her pace. It is a man in uniform. She walks more slowly, she does not want to attract attention. She feels the man's eyes resting on her—suppose he stops her! Now he is quite near; it is a policeman. She walks calmly past him, and hears him stop behind her. With an effort she continues in the same slow pace. She hears the jingle of street-car bells—ah, it can not be midnight yet. She walks more quickly—hurrying toward the city, the lights of which begin there by the railroad

viaduct—the growing noise tells her how near she is. One lonely stretch of street, and then she is safe. Now she hears a shrill whistle coming rapidly nearer—a wagon flies swiftly past her. She stops and looks after it; it is the ambulance of the Rescue Society. She knows where it is going. “How quickly they have come,” she thinks; “it is like magic.” For a moment she feels that she must call to them, must go back with them. Shame, terrible, overwhelming shame, such as she has never known before, shakes her from head to foot—she knows how vile, how cowardly she is. Then, as the whistle and the rumble of wheels fade away in the distance, a mad joy takes hold of her. She is saved—saved! She hurries on; she meets more people, but she does not fear them—the worst is over. The noise of the city grows louder, the street is lighter, the skyline of the Prater street rises before her, and she knows that she can sink into a flood tide of humanity there and lose herself in it. When she comes to a street lamp she is quite calm enough now to take out her watch and look at it. It is ten minutes to nine. She holds the watch to her ear—it is ticking merrily. And she thinks: “Here I am, alive, unharmed—and he—he—dead. It is Fate.” She feels as if all had been forgiven—as if she had never sinned. And what if Fate had willed otherwise? If it were she lying there in the ditch, and he who remained alive? He would not have run away—but then he is a man. She is only a woman, she has a husband, a child—it was her right—her duty—to save herself. She knows that it was not a sense of duty that impelled her to do it. But what

she has done was right—she had done right instinctively—as all good people do. If she had stayed she would have been discovered by this time. The doctors would question her. And all the papers would report it next morning; she would have been ruined forever, and yet her ruin could not bring him back to life. Yes, that was the main point, her sacrifice would have been all in vain. She crosses under the railway bridge and hurries on. There is the Tegethoff Column, where so many streets meet. There are but few people in the park on this stormy evening, but to her it seems as if the life of the city was roaring about her. It was so horribly still back there. She had plenty of time now. She knows that her husband will not be home before ten o'clock. She will have time to change her clothes. And then it occurs to her to look at her gown. She is horrified to see how soiled it is. What shall she say to the maid about it? And next morning the papers will all bring the story of the accident, and they will tell of a woman who had been in the carriage, and who had run away. She trembled afresh. One single carelessness and she is lost, even now. But she has her latch-key with her; she can let herself in; no one will hear her come. She jumps into a cab and is about to give her address, then suddenly she remembers that this would not be wise. She gives any number that occurs to her.

As she drives through the Prater street she wishes that she might feel something—grief—horror—but she can not. She has but one thought, one desire—to be at home, in safety. All else is indifferent to her. When

she had decided to leave him alone, dead, by the roadside—in that moment everything seemed to have died within her, everything that would mourn and grieve for him. She has no feeling but that of fear for herself. She is not heartless—she knows that the day will come when her sorrow will be despair—it may kill her even. But she knows nothing now, except the desire to sit quietly at home, at the supper table with her husband and child. She looks out through the cab window. She is driving through the streets of the inner city. It is brilliantly light here, and many people hurry past. Suddenly all that she has experienced in the last few hours seems not to be true, it is like an evil dream; not something real, irreparable. She stops her cab in one of the side streets of the Ring, gets out, turns a corner quickly, and takes another carriage, giving her own address this time. She does not seem able to think of anything any more. "Where is he now?" She closes her eyes and sees him on the litter, in the ambulance. Suddenly she feels that he is here beside her. The cab sways, she feels the terror of being thrown out again, and she screams aloud. The cab halts before the door of her home. She dismounts hastily, hurries with light steps through the house door, unseen by the concierge, runs up the stairs, opens her apartment door very gently, and slips unseen into her own room. She undresses hastily, hiding the mud-stained clothes in her cupboard. Tomorrow, when they are dry, she can clean them herself. She washes hands and face, and slips into a loose housegown.

The bell rings. She hears the maid open the door, she hears her husband's voice, and the rattle of his cane on the hat-stand. She feels she must be brave now or it will all have been in vain. She hurries to the dining-room, entering one door as her husband comes in at the other.

"Ah, you're home already?" he asks.

"Why, yes," she replies, "I have been home some time."

"They evidently didn't hear you come in."

She smiles without effort. But it fatigues her horribly to have to smile. He kisses her forehead.

The little boy is already at his place by the table. He has been waiting some time, and has fallen asleep, his head resting on an open book. She sits down beside him; her husband takes his chair opposite, takes up a paper, and glances carelessly at it. Then he says: "The others are still talking away there."

"What about?" she asks.

And he begins to tell her about the meeting, at length. Emma pretends to listen, and nods now and then. But she does not hear what he is saying, she feels dazed, like one who has escaped terrible danger as by a miracle; she can feel only this: "I am safe; I am at home." And while her husband is talking she pulls her chair nearer the boy's and lifts his head to her shoulder. Fatigue inexpressible comes over her. She can no longer control herself; she feels that her eyes are closing, that she is dropping asleep.

Suddenly another possibility presents itself to her mind, a possibility that she had dismissed the moment

she turned to leave the ditch where she had fallen. Suppose he were not dead! Suppose—oh, but it is impossible—his eyes—his lips—not a breath came from them! But there are trances that are like death, which deceive even practised eyes, and she knows nothing about such things. Suppose he is still alive—suppose he has regained consciousness and found himself alone by the roadside—suppose he calls her by her name? He might think she had been injured; he might tell the doctors that there was a woman with him, and that she must have been thrown to some distance. They will look for her. The coachman will come back with the men he has brought, and will tell them that she was there, unhurt—and Franz will know the truth. Franz knows her so well—he will know that she has run away—and a great anger will come over him. He will tell them her name in revenge. For he is mortally injured, and it will hurt him cruelly that she has left him alone in his last hour. He will say: “That is Mrs. Emma ——. I am her lover. She is cowardly and stupid, too, gentlemen, for she might have known you would not ask her name; you would be discreet; you would have let her go away unmolested. Oh, she might at least have waited until you came. But she is vile—utterly vile—ah!”

“What is the matter?” asks the Professor, very gravely, rising from his chair.

“What? What?”

“Yes, what is the matter with you?”

“Nothing.” She presses the boy closer to her breast.

The Professor looks at her for a few minutes steadily.

"Didn't you know that you had fallen asleep, and—"

"Well?— And—"

"And then you screamed out in your sleep."

"Did I?"

"You screamed as if you were having a nightmare. Were you dreaming?"

"I don't know—"

And she sees her face in a mirror opposite, a face tortured into a ghastly smile. She knows it is her own face, and it terrifies her. She sees that it is frozen; that this hideous smile is frozen on it, and will always be there, all her life. She tries to cry out. Two hands are laid on her shoulders, and between her own face and the mirrored one her husband's face pushes its way in; his eyes pierce into hers. She knows that unless she is strong for this last trial all is lost. And she feels that she is strong; she has regained control of her limbs, but the moment of strength is short. She raises her hands to his, which rest on her shoulders; she draws him down to her, and smiles naturally and tenderly into his eyes.

She feels his lips on her forehead, and she thinks: "It is all a dream—he will never tell—he will never take revenge like that—he is dead—really dead—and the dead are silent—"

"Why did you say that?" she hears her husband's voice suddenly.

She starts. "What did I say?" And it seems to her as if she had told everything, here at the table—

aloud before every one—and again she asks, shuddering before his horrified eyes, “What did I say?”

“The dead are silent.” her husband repeats very slowly.

“Yes,” she answers

And she reads in his eyes that she can no longer hide anything from him. They look long and silently at each other. “Put the boy to bed,” he says at last. “You have something to tell me, have you not?”

“Yes—”

She knows now that within a few moments she will tell this man everything—this man, whom she has deceived for many years.

And while she goes slowly through the door, holding her boy, she feels her husband’s eyes still resting on her, and a great peace comes over her, the assurance that now many things would be right again.

MARGRET'S PILGRIMAGE

BY CLARA VIEBIG



Clara Viebig, foremost of the young women writers of modern Germany, was born in the early seventies, in the Eifel country of Prussia. Her first book, "Daughters of the Rhineland," appeared in 1896, with a leaning toward the new "woman movement." But her first great success was the novel, "Children of the Eifel," which introduced a new subject as well as a new writer. It is the picture of a "stirring prophet of doom in the midst of the smiling Rhineland." In dealing with nature, Clara Viebig is masculine, yet when she deals with the brutalities of nature, she is all womanly, without flinching. The expectation raised by these stories was justified in her next book, "Our Daily Bread," showing such keenness of observation, strength of portraiture, loving insight, and startling directness that it is considered by many the best that newer German literature has produced.



MARGRET'S PILGRIMAGE

BY CLARA VIEBIG

IT was already autumn on the heights of the Eifel. The cold winds blew in from the north, snorting in malicious haste. They colored the thin grass yellow, and tousled the gnarled firs and the trembling birches. Down in the sunny Moselle Valley the roses still bloomed in the gardens, in their glory of white, red, and yellow petals. Heavily laden fruit trees nodded over the crystal clear stream, the rich blood swelled the grape, and walnut and chestnut trees burst open the green coverings of their fruit and shook the shining brown heart of it down upon the earth. But up on the heights the nights smelt of winter already. The sloes hung blue and tart on the blackthorn, cold frost silvered the grass and the moss, and heavy mists filled the ravines. It was inhospitably cold and unfriendly. The Eifel with its treeless heights, its purple moors, and its dark tarns made itself ready to receive its stern master, the Winter.

Where the wood halts and only brush can grow, a tiny hut clung to the rocks. It was a miserably poor little nest with a low hanging roof of moss, on top of which house-leek and other growing plants caught foothold, even one saucy little pine tree had settled down there. The door was low, the window covered

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with paper, but a contented white goat munched the grass in front of the door, and a few weather-beaten sunflowers nodded their heavy heads in fat condescension.

In this lonely hut, the poorest for many a mile, lived the honest widow Anna Maria Balduin. She had lived there many years, ever since the time, eighteen years back, when she had entered it as the happy bride of Peter Balduin, the sturdy woodchopper. Five years later they had carried him out and buried him in the little hill churchyard down in Kyllburg. That had been a bad year. The potato crop was a failure, bread rose in price, the famine fever ravished the Eifel, the snow fell early, and hungry wolves crept down to the outlying huts. In the widow's little home the care for daily bread, grief for the lost one, cold, and deprivation were daily guests. The pale woman sat at her spinning wheel and let the tears flow free, while her little daughter Margret knelt beside her, laughing and playing with pebbles, unheeding her mother's sorrow.

Years had passed since then; the fresh grave had fallen in and grass had grown over it, as over the wounds of the heart. The little hut had grown more dilapidated, and little Margret had become a tall girl. She sat by the door spinning for her daily bread in the service of the rich peasants' wives, and had the goat tied to her foot by a string, so that she could care for it without stopping her work. Margret spun and spun, looking up occasionally, aimlessly, or in unconscious longing, at the sky above her, which domed pale blue and unapproachably cool over the bare, rocky hilltops.



Clara Viebig

Clara Viebig



Her mother was very ill. For weeks and months she had lain bent and stiff, drawn with rheumatic pains, in the worm-eaten bed on her coarse pillows, too helpless sometimes even to raise her hand to her mouth. "It looks bad," the wise woman from Kyllburg had said, when after much entreaty and a payment of fifty pfennings (twelve and a half cents) down she had been persuaded to climb up to the miserable hut. She took away with her the widow's one hen, and left a magic medicine in its place. But the medicine did no magic, the sick woman groaned and moaned more than ever, and the screech owl, the bird of death, screamed each midnight outside the window.

This was a particularly bad day. Pretty Margret sat by the bedside with drooping head. Her busy fingers continued to spin, but her usually laughing brown eyes were filled with tears. She was a good child, who had nothing in all the world but her mother and her seventeen years. But her fresh youth was blighted by the sorrow for her mother as the flowers in May are smitten by hail.

It was a little brightening of the sadness when a knock came on the door and a fat peasant woman pushed herself over the threshold with sighs and pantings.

"Praise be Jesus Christ."

"Forever and ever, amen."

The visitor was a cousin from Kyllburg, Frau Margareta Rindsfusser, Margret's godmother. She had climbed up the mountain to see them, the good, kind soul, even if she *was* a little too comfortably complete.

She unpacked a basket she carried on her arm: there was sausage in it, rolls, chicory, and eggs.

"Well, Anna, how are the pains?"

"Bad, very bad."

"Yes, yes," the visitor nodded, "I don't believe myself that you'll be with us long. You'd better be making ready for the blessed death."

"O dear Lord Jesus," moaned the sick woman, "I'd be so glad to die—but it's leaving Margret, and she so young."

"Yes, it's true." The visitor blinked her eyes and blew her nose violently in her gay-colored handkerchief. "It's bitter hard, but there's no help. Yet, if you could get down to Trier to see the Sacred Coat, that could help you."

"Help her? The Sacred Coat?" Margret had been listening with wide, open eyes; now she approached and touched the visitor's sleeve. "Auntie, please tell me, what is the Sacred Coat?"

Frau Margareta Rindsfusser crossed herself piously. "Intercede for us, Sacred Coat, for forgiveness for our sins— Why, girl, how stupid you are! Down there in Trier the bells are ringing day and night, they are ringing until the fish in the Moselle take fright. You'd think you could hear the dingdonging even up here. And people come from all over the world, up along the Moselle, with crosses and banners, and they sing, they pray to the Sacred Coat. My father's brother's son, Stadtfeld's Hanni, he's been there. He told me about it. He didn't have no children, so he went down there and touched the Sacred Coat with his wedding

ring; that helped. The priests in the Holy Cathedral, they showed the Coat, and whoever is sick gets well again. 'And if any one has somebody sick at home, and takes something belonging to them with him, a shirt, or a kerchief, or anything, the sick one will get well again."

"O blessed Lord Jesus!" the girl clasped her hands as if in prayer. "Mother, I'll go there."

"It's too far." The sick woman sighed, half anxiously, half longingly. "I can't let you. You are my only child— Something might happen. Jesus, Maria, Joseph!"

"Oh, mother, let me go. I've been down as far as the Moselle with berries, and it's just going a little further; I can find Trier so easy. And if I pray many thousand times to the Sacred Coat, then it will surely help. And when I come back again, then you're all well. Oh, mother, just think!"

The girl caught the sick woman in her arms with a laugh of joy. She pressed a fresh, blooming cheek to her mother's pale, hollow face. "Mother, say yes. I'll go down to pray to the Sacred Coat. I'll go to-morrow."

"Anna, let her go, in God's name, and the Holy Virgin will be with her," said the visitor. "I'll come up every day to look after the goat—and to look after you."

And she took her departure, much touched.

When evening came, Margret milked the goat and got the supper. Then she stood at the well and scrubbed herself as if she had not seen water for a

week. The Sacred Coat could indeed demand that one should be clean and bright from head to foot. Then she went into the house and knelt before the picture of the Virgin, which looked down, gay with many colors, from out of its little gold frame on the whitewashed wall. Her prayer was long and heartfelt. It was not only the Paternoster and the Ave that she prayed to-day—her tension, her expectations, and secret anxieties for the coming day brought words of her own in entreaty to her lips.

Then she sank down exhausted on her bed. Her hands folded over her breast, she was soon breathing the deep, regular breath of sweet, youthful sleep.

When she awoke, day was breaking already, and the sun was shaking itself out of its morning dreams behind rose-tipped clouds. It was high time to set out.

Frau Anna wept as she saw her daughter standing before her, fresh and rosy-cheeked, her black sunday dress pinned up over her blue underskirt, around her slender throat the black cord with a tiny golden cross. In one hand she held the bundle in which was her mother's shirt, which was to be offered to the Sacred Coat, that the miracle might be performed. Furthermore, there were her shining black shoes and her white stockings, which she was to put on when she reached the city gates. And also there was her godmother's present, the Sunday apron with its colored flowers, Margret's fairest possession, her greatest pride. But there was nothing too good for the Sacred Coat.

The bright, young eyes gazed confidently into her

mother's face. "Good-by—and when I come back, then you'll be well again."

A clasp of the hand, the sign of the Cross on brow and breast, a murmured blessing, a friendly nod—and now she turned and stood on the threshold, and the first golden rays of the sun kissed her fair, young cheek.

Thus Margret's pilgrimage began.

The birds twittered in the bushes, dewdrops hung like diamonds on leaf and grass, as Margret sprang light-footed down the hill slope. Down there in the gray of the morning mists lay Kyllburg. The cocks were crowing, but there was no smoke from the chimneys. The people were still asleep. It must be nice to live in Kyllburg, one was not so alone there as up on the mountain. And evenings the girls could sit together in the spinning-room and laugh and chat, each with her sweetheart beside her. It must be nice to have a sweetheart. Would she, little Margret, ever have a sweetheart? Probably not. Mother said: "Poor girls get no sweethearts."

Hello! There was a big stone, and she nearly fell over it. That comes of thinking about such stupid things. What could a sweetheart matter to her? She was poor little Margret from the cottage on the hill-top, and she was going down to pray to the Sacred Coat. She took her rosary from her pocket and let the little balls roll busily through her fingers, as her rosy lips murmured the prayers. That helped to shorten the road.

The wood grew denser, the crippled firs and meagre birches gave place to slender beeches and stately oaks. Bright colored flowers grew about in the grass, a breath of warmth came into the air, and a brooklet ran busily valleyward. How beautiful it was here! Margret stood still and drew a deep breath. She had come a long distance already, the sun stood noon-high.

Until now she had not met a human being, alone with her angels had she wandered through the world. But now from the distance there came a noise as of many voices; a few paces more and she was out of the forest, standing beside the broad turnpike road, on the other side of which the Moselle flowed, calm and beautiful! Like a silver ribbon the river wound itself gently between the vine-clad banks, its ripples moved softly, and the golden sun and the laughing blue sky peeped down into the crystal mirror.

Margret's face shone. There was the Moselle. Now it could not be much farther. She must soon hear the bells of Trier. And there, right in front of her, came a solemn, stately procession, with waving banners. The leader intoned a chant and sang the Ave, and the chorus joined, many-voiced, in the refrain. Margret crossed herself and stepped to one side.

How many people there were! She would have liked to join them, but the women at the end of the procession did not look amiable, and a pretty young girl in a red petticoat gazed at her from head to foot so sharply that her courage failed her. She waited until they had all passed, then she followed at a little distance as the procession crept slowly along the river-

bank like a long, black caterpillar. With the entire herd to point the way, the single lonely sheep can not go wrong.

The sun burned hotly, the dust flew up in clouds; hadn't she come to Trier yet? Margret was hungry, her feet hurt her. Wouldn't it be better to put on her shoes? But no, they must be kept bright and shining for the city. So she trotted along the road that seemed endless. A cherry tree and then an apple tree, and then a cherry tree and an apple tree again, and now and then a heap of stones and a milestone—how long it was!

The train of pilgrims was some distance ahead; Margret limped wearily after them. She would have liked so much to rest a while by the wayside. But then she would have lost sight of the procession, and that would not do at all. So she took a piece of bread and a bit of cheese from her bundle, and bit into it with her strong, white teeth as she walked along.

The sun sank toward the sky-line, the evening wove its delicate veil over the river and the valley. High above, the summits of the mountains still shone in golden light, and tiny little cushiony clouds grew rosy pink at their edges. Margret's clear eyes grew tired, her foot rose and fell more slowly. Oh, how nice it would be to rest now, like the little birds that were just slipping into their nests! There, listen! A deep rich tone hummed through the air, and now another, and another, and the wind brought other voices to her, finer and thinner, that wove a lighter figure about the single great voice. It was the bells of Trier.

The tired girl folded her hands a moment, then she hurried joyfully onward. One more turn of the road and there lay mighty Trier glowing in the evening rays, which gleamed back from its gray roofs and towers just across the bridge spanning the river with stone arches.

And over the bridge the crowd pushed and swayed. Walkers, alone or in groups, pressed hastily forward; long lines of wagons rattled on in single file, many banners waved in the evening wind. It was such a mighty migration, such a crowding and hastening to get into the Blessed City that the lonely maiden's heart beat heavy. No, she would not enter there yet, she would rather spend the night out here, on this side of the river, where there were not so many houses.

A solitary inn stood by the wayside, she decided to enter there. Her hand sought for the few pennies in her pocket. She had money, she could pay for her night's lodging, and she walked more quickly down the little path that led to the inn door. But here she nearly turned back again, such a rush and noise of voices met her. From the open windows came the sound of singing, shouting, and laughter. The wagons were crowded in the courtyard, servants ran hastily back and forth. She entered timidly, no one paid any attention to her. She laid her little bundle down on a still vacant seat at the end of a bench and sat down beside it, holding it tightly in her hand. The noise and the shouting made her dizzy. Not a place was unoccupied, everybody seemed to be doing just about as he liked. Here sat three men playing cards, two more

were quarreling, and had almost come to blows; in another corner sat several telling their rosaries, and one had already lain down on the straw and was snoring aloud. There, in a corner, sat the pretty young woman with the red petticoat whom Margret had seen on the road. She was joking with a couple of young men.

Would it be well to speak to her? She seemed quite friendly. Margret approached her, timidly blushing: "Were you going to Trier, to the Sacred Coat?"

"Yes."

"Do you stop here the night? I'd like to stay;" Margret took her pennies out of her pocket. "Yes, I can pay for it, but I'm scared, so alone."

The stranger had listened quietly, then she pushed at one of her companions, winked at the other, and all three burst out into a loud laugh.

"You can stay with me," said one of the youths, twisting his mustache ends upward; "then you won't be scared."

He put out his hand toward Margret, but she pushed him back, snatched her bundle, and ran out of the door as quickly as a squirrel. She fled down the street as if pursued. The noise from the inn had long ceased behind her before she stopped, heavily panting.

What should she do now? Go back into the inn to all those many people, and the noise, and the screaming? Oh, no. It were far better to stay out here under God's free heaven, where the stars looked down on one like kind eyes, and the crickets chirped amiably,

from the grass. Behind the bushes by the roadside she saw a little straw hut, which probably belonged to the overseer of the orchards. Margret peeped cautiously into the little door; the hut was empty and half falling to pieces. With a sigh of relief she crept in under the low roof. She took out her last piece of bread, and when she had eaten it she put her bundle under her head, drew up her skirt over her shoulders, and fell asleep.

The sun stood shining and golden, well up in the sky, when Margret woke out of her deep sleep. She looked round, dazed; the preceding day seemed like a dream to her, and she herself seemed to be a stranger, some new and wonderful person. Yes, there lay mighty Trier, there was the Moselle, there was the inn from which she had fled—and she herself? Why, yes, she was little Margret, who was going down to pray to the Sacred Coat. It was high time to be up and doing. Hastily she slipped down to the river-bank behind a heavy thicket of willows where nobody could see her. She laid aside her dress, bathed her face, neck, and arms in the fresh, cool flood, and let the clear ripples flow over her naked feet. She braided up her long hair afresh, smoothing it with water, until it lay neat as wax behind her rosy ears. She fastened the silver arrow amid the braids, drew on her shoes and stockings, fastened her beautiful apron into place—and now she was ready.

Groups of wanderers came along the road; many of them turned to look with pleasure after the young peasant girl who walked on in her springtime fresh-

ness and prettiness, with the light of pious faith in her eyes. If the bridge had been crowded yesterday, it was very much worse to-day. There was a running and a pushing about as in an ant-hill, the air trembled with the monotonous murmuring of "Sacred Coat, intercede for us." One procession after the other dragged itself slowly over the ancient stone arches.

"Sacred Coat, intercede for us. Sacred Coat, intercede for us."

There was a humming, as of a swarm of bees, a slow crowding through the narrow alleys which were gay in festal ornament. There was no house, however lowly, that did not have some bit of decoration in its windows, a rug, or a banner, a holy picture behind burning candles. And almost every window was full of faces looking down with curiosity, or with pious belief. The nearer they came to the cathedral the greater the tumult. In the open squares the merchants stood before their booths crying their wares: "Rosaries—fresh cakes here—pilgrims' staves—new-made sausage—correct descriptions of the relics in the cathedral: the Tooth of St. Peter, the Hand of St. Anne, a splinter and a nail from the Holy Cross—only correct picture of the Sacred Coat—very cheap, only ten pfennigs apiece." The Sacred Coat here, the Sacred Coat there, whichever way one looked, whichever way one listened—it was an ear-splitting tumult, a confusion to make one dizzy. And through the chaos of colors and sounds, through the dust and the smell, through the fraud and the truth, the faith and the

unbelief, there drew, like a guiding thread, the monotonous murmuring of the processions, the dull booming of the bells.

Margret was dazed and bewildered. She had bought a bit of bread in a baker's shop, and asked her way of the kindly woman there. Now she stood as if lost in the middle of the street, pressing her bundle firmly under one arm.

A new procession came past her; she fell in line with the last women in the train, and followed along with them. One of them, praying busily, turned to her with an unfriendly look: "Praise be to thee, Maria, full of grace— What do you want, girl?"

"I'm going to the Sacred Coat."

"What are you doing here? This is our procession, costs us good money. Get away from here."

The woman pushed her aside roughly with her elbows. The pious pilgrims passed onward, and Margret looked after them with tears in her eyes. How fortunate they were, these happy ones! They would get there first, the Sacred Coat would give them all its blessings, and there would be nothing left for her. (And she had a sick mother at home!) She ran after them hastily.

Now she was in the square in front of the cathedral, but a mighty mob of many thousands stood between her and the high, gray portals which, wide open as they were, could not hold the human stream flowing into them. The beadles in their red garments, with long staffs in their hands, stood like fiery cherubim at the entrance to the paradise, and ordered the crowd,

throwing them into line. The mass moved slowly forward. Margret stood in the last rows, crowded and pushed from all sides. Finally the human wall in front of her gave way in one spot and she slipped through, not heeding the elbows and shoulders stretched out to hold her back. She was almost at the portals, but now there was no further movement, the mob stood motionless. There was no going backward or forward, the beadle held their staffs before the entrance. There was not room for another soul to get in at the door.

The ringing of the bells ceased with a long-drawn sigh; rich organ notes boomed through the air. The incense wafted upward. "*O vestis inconsutilis.*" With a singing as of angels' voices, the sounds wafted out from the church into the sun-bathed air, solemnly soaring high over the heads of the massed community. The heads bowed as a ripe field of grain bows under the breath of the wind; all sank to their knees and beat their hands to their breasts. "*O vestis inconsutilis*" came as in one breath from a thousand lips. Then there was silence, as all listened. Within the cathedral the singing had stopped, the voice of the priest was heard. Then there was silence again. "Now they are showing the Sacred Coat—now they are touching it." Margret heard whispering around her. "Now they will be freed from all their sins and the sick ones will be made well." Oh, those happy ones!

Heavy tears rolled over Margret's cheeks. She had wandered so far on her tired feet, and now she stood so near the door, and yet could not get in to the Sacred Coat. Bitter sobs shook her breast. A couple of

well-dressed gentlemen beside her began to notice her. "What are you crying for, girl?" asked one of them in a friendly tone. She was startled at first, then she stammered: "I—I—I've come from so far—from way up in the Eifel— I got a sick mother at home— Here's her shirt"—she drew an end of it out of the bundle—"I was to touch the Sacred Coat with it— And now I can't get in at all— Oh, dear Lord Jesus—and—and—and now my mother won't get well at all." The gentleman bit his lips and nudged his companion, who put his hat to his face and turned away. Then the first gentleman spoke again: "My dear child, you needn't cry so. It isn't at all necessary that you should go into the church. Step a little this way, now raise yourself up as high as you can—there, do you see, inside the church, something red in front of the altar? That is the Sacred Coat. Now they are moving it. Can you see it?"

Oh, that was it, was it, that bright red thing? How clear and sharp the color was, like the girl's skirt in the inn. Margret stood on the tips of her toes and stretched out her hands: "Sacred Coat— My mother—"

"Shh—" The strange gentleman drew her down again. "Now, you see, you have seen the Sacred Coat, and it has seen you; it can hear your voice from here. Now, you pray the best you can, and when they begin to sing again in the church, and the bells toll, then your mother will get well."

Margret hid her face in her hands. Oh, she could pray, and she would pray the best she knew how.

She prayed until the drops came out on her forehead, all the prayers that she had ever learned, and gave them all as refrain the same line over and over again: "Sacred Coat, O Sacred Coat, make my mother well."

Within the church the great organ toned out again, and the voices floated down, "Ecclesia, missa, est." Margret rose from her knees with a great and confident joy in her heart. Now her mother would be well again. She knew it.

As she looked about her she could see nothing more of the friendly gentleman. The crowd was beginning to disperse. And now she discovered for the first time how very tired and hungry she was. Her knees trembled; the sun burned down hot upon her, and white clouds grew up in the sky, as if portending a thunderstorm.

She felt that she must rest a little, but not here in the hot and dusty city. She wanted to be out again, past the gates, amid the green; then she could start on her homeward way refreshed.

She walked back unhindered through the streets by which she had come; with her last pennies she bought some bread and fruit. Then she hurried out with her packages over the old bridge to her cozy willow grove beside the Moselle. The noise of the city remained behind her; nothing moved about her here but the breath of the wind in the bushes, and the hum of the little blue flies in the air. Every now and then a fish would spring out of the river and fall back again into the refreshing flood with a little splash. A dreamy silence surrounded the tired girl. There was no sound

of the bells, no human voice, nothing but peace and rest.

Now she had eaten her bread and fruit, and sat quietly in the shade of the willows, her head sinking gently down upon her arm.

She did not know how long she had slept, or even if she had slept at all; a loud laugh aroused her. The two gentlemen who had spoken to her in front of the church stood before her. "Here's luck," said one of them. "One doesn't meet a little fool like this every day. Are you much edified, little one?"

"Leave her alone," said the one who had spoken to her before. "She's so pretty. Well, my dear child," he said then, and put his hand under her chin, "you know you owe me thanks. Without me you would not have seen the Sacred Coat, and your mother would not have been made well. What are you going to give me for it?"

"Oh, good sir," Margret courtesied, and took his hand confidently, "I thank you many thousand times. If I knew where you live I would bring you pine cones to help make the fire, and berries, and I will spin for your dear lady for nothing."

"I thank you, my dear child"—the gentleman drew down the corners of his mouth—"but that's a little too far off. You might give me a kiss, though, don't you think, or perhaps two."

"And me, too," laughed the other. "We are good friends, and we'll divide even."

The frightened girl looked from one to the other. She drew her skirts together with her left hand and

held her right arm out in front of her as if for protection. "No, oh, no!"

"Oh, yes, don't be so foolish, little one."

The gentleman's face was not nearly so friendly now. He put out his arm and caught the girl in spite of her struggles. She tore herself loose with a scream, and sprang back from him.

There was a noise behind them in the bushes. A tall man stepped out between Margret and her pursuers. "Let that girl alone"—the stranger twirled a heavy stick in the air—"or I'll show you something, you—"

The two men turned, murmuring something about a "clown of a peasant" and disappeared.

Margret stood as if rooted to the ground, trembling in her fright.

The youth reached for her hand. "Come with me," he said.

She followed obediently along the road which she had come the day before. They walked along for a little while side by side without saying a word. The girl's eyes rested now and then shyly on the figure of the young man. How slender and strong he was! How prettily his hair curled, and how daring his little mustache! A deep blush grew up over Margret's cheeks; she drew her hand slowly out of the fingers that held her so gently and stepped over to the other side of the street. Then they walked on on either side of the road; a look would now and then pass from one to the other, shy and timid. The sky was overcast, the burning sun covered with clouds. The wind

had freshened, and was rustling the tree-tops along the wayside, throwing down showers of leaves and ripe fruit. The city was hidden behind a veil of whirling dust; soft thunder grumbled in the distance, the birds fluttered anxiously and sought noisily for a shelter. Gray caps of fog drew over the tops of the mountains, and there was a smell of cool rain in the air.

"There's bad weather coming," said the youth finally, gazing up searchingly at the sky.

"Yes," answered Margret. And just then the first drops fell, heavy and impudent.

"Where did you come from?" asked the boy.

"From the Eifel, up there by Kyllburg."

"Kyllburg's where I live; that's fine, we can go on together."

"Oh, yes," said Margret, and breathed a sigh of relief. She felt quite safe and contented beside her stately companion. No one could hurt her now, and she need not be afraid of the night in the forest.

"I am Valentin Rohles. My father is dead; I live with my mother, but she's so old now."

"Yes," replied Margret shyly. She knew the name; it was one of the best in the town, but she had never seen the young man before. She had heard the girls saying how glad they were when handsome young Rohles came home from the army. But what should the poor cotter's daughter have to do with a rich peasant's son? What would the girls in Kyllburg say if they could see how friendly he was now with poor little Margret? She looked down at herself in sudden alarm. Was her dress all smooth and nice? Then

her clear eyes were raised again in grateful confidence to her companion's face.

"I am Margret, from Balduin's hut. You can see it from Kyllburg across the mountain."

"What did you want in Trier? Did you go to the Sacred Coat?"

Yes, that was it! And now the whole story of her joys and sorrows gushed out over Margret's lips. She was so happy to be able to tell somebody all the troubles and worries of her heart. In the excitement of her story she came over from her side of the street, close up to the young man, and laid her brown, work-hardened fingers on the fine cloth of his coat sleeve. "But now it will be all right," she ended. "Mother will get well— Oh, the blessed Sacred Coat—" She laughed aloud in her joy and danced over the rain-pools in the street light as a young fawn.

She did not notice that more than once during her story her listener's lips had curled in a smile that was mainly good-natured, but just a little mocking. His eyes looked roguishly down upon her, resting on her sweet, young face, flushed with excitement. The open, brown stars of her eyes and his roguish, blue ones met in a long look. They rested there until the girl, blushing suddenly, dropped her eyes and the young man spoke with an embarrassed smile: "You're a good girl, Margret. Give me your hand again."

The rain came down in torrents now. Margret drew her skirt up over her head, holding it together in front of her face. It seemed quite natural that the youth should lay his arm around her shoulder and guide her

